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The Future of the Humanities

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Preface to the Issue "The Future of the Humanities"

To TRAVEL the world these days, particularly in that narrow East-West corridor that serves to link the so-called "developed countries," is to become aware of a profound disquietude, shared in varying degrees by almost all who are disposed to reflect on the condition of contemporary society. In the United States, where war, racial tension and poverty provoke distress, a proclivity towards pessimism is constantly challenged by the idea that reform is still possible. However dispiriting life in the United States becomes, there is a residual belief that political and social engagement may yet alter the balance in favor of fundamental change.

Abroad, in Europe, for example, where young people are spared the agony of war, disenchantment with the artifacts of industrial society seems no less intense; the promise of material abundance is not sufficient to command respect or allegiance even from those who are the presumed beneficiaries of this new industrial plenty. Everywhere, authority is suspect; the governance of tradition is questioned, and neither parent, teacher, bureaucrat nor churchman seems able to maintain himself against the insult that he provokes.

The ideal of scholarship—with its presumed bias in favor of objectivity and impartiality—is itself challenged. In the humanities, quite as much as in the social sciences and the natural sciences, questions are asked about the social utility of inquiry that for many decades was unquestioned, its value having never been doubted. Motives are probed as they have not been in the past, and new criteria are offered for estimating the worth of particular endeavor.

The more sanguine among us say that we are witnessing a "reformation" of traditional attitudes towards scholarship; others see the turmoil as evidence of a more fundamental revolt, whose long-range effects we cannot hope to divine. Whether it be the former or the latter, it is indisputable that something of the greatest importance is happening. Whether one regards the politicization of humanistic enterprise as a virtue or a vice, the new a-historicism as a good or an evil, these developments presage others that are calculated to alter the nature of humanistic enterprise.

This, then, is a particularly propitious moment to consider where the humanities are tending. A grant from the Ford Foundation for inquiry in the general area of the humanities gives us the widest latitude in our search for some kind of meaning about the events

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in which we participate. This issue is only the first of several we hope to publish that will explore new trends in those disciplines we generally call humanistic. There is a good deal in this issue that readers will not agree with; there is a certain amount that the Editors themselves question. Yet, it would be a mistake to understate the importance of the questions that are posed here. We feel a great indebtedness to the Ford Foundation for making the issue possible.

The issue could not have come to fruition but for the efforts of Professor James Ackerman of Harvard University. He has taken the lead in bringing scholars and artists together, in meetings extending over several years, and he has given the most careful attention to all the work that has been prepared for both the conferences and the issue. We are much beholden to him.

S. R. G.

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JAMES S. ACKERMAN

Introduction to the Issue "The Future of the Humanities"

FIVE YEARS ago, at the *Dædalus* conference whose deliberations were published in the issue "Science and Culture," a distinguished group of scientists and representatives of the humanities met to discuss the role of science and technology in our culture. At that time, the majority of the humanists spoke as if the future of liberal education was being threatened by the dominance of a scientific world-view concerned only with cold facts and devoid of the "values" they believed to be their own peculiar province. What those values were, and how scholars and practitioners of literature, the arts, and philosophy were equipped to preserve them were not defined. The inference appeared to be that the powers of Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Bach, and Plato justified almost any kind of research and teaching about them.

More recently, in discussing the issues raised by "Science and Culture" its editor Gerald Holton, Stephen Graubard, and I agreed that the humanists' position deserved more intensive examination, and that funds made available to the Academy for studies in the humanities might be used in part to sponsor two further conferences with participants selected largely from the humanistic disciplines. We did not find it easy at the start to identify interested colleagues, because humanists are less disposed or accustomed to interdisciplinary talk than scientists and social scientists, and because in this country they are not inclined to theorize or to generalize on the nature of their work. Since we sought those whom we knew through the journals or personal contact to be exceptions to this rule, our participants may not express characteristic professional attitudes in their fields. Indeed, their concern for matters of this sort may make them slightly suspect in the view of specialists who believe

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that one's hard-won time should be devoted wholly to the exercise of one's craft.

The participants were asked to submit memoranda in advance of the two meetings, and in these papers the attempt to arrive at a definition of "values" in the several fields of the humanities was a common theme, though no agenda had been set. But as we came together, this evasive problem shifted to the periphery. At first, the differences among the several fields were more evident than the similarities, but we discovered after some maneuvering that we did have a common ground, though it was a great distance from where we believed it would be. Few of the participants felt any longer the need to defend their work from the encroachments of science—in fact, science was spoken of as an ally in a common cause—but that was not because the humanities had developed a greater sense of security. On the contrary, the prevailing mood was one of self-criticism based on the conviction that if the humanities had lost ground, it was not because other studies had become more vital, but because the humanities were not living up to their potential as vehicles for the understanding of man's achievement and promise.

What had caused this change? Since 1965 the world outside the academy had developed such serious symptoms of disruption that it was no longer possible to keep its problems out of the study and the classroom. The war in Vietnam and the riots in the cities had brought to the fore the moral dilemmas of our country, and the tensions prompted by these calamities and by other social dislocations had hindered or blocked rational communication on the campuses to a degree that could not be ignored by any teacher. The normal goal of education in the humanities, the introduction of young people to the "central" traditions of Western culture through the critical analysis of great works, began to appear too restricted, since it had failed to prepare earlier generations to apply their learning to the solution of pressing moral, political, and even aesthetic problems. Education had lost some of its "relevance"—to use the term most frequently (but reluctantly) employed during the conference—and this was true not only for the humanities, but for all disciplines (though the practical utility of the sciences and social sciences obscured the failure in those areas and encouraged the experts to feel secure in their normal way of working).

The responses of the participants to the issue of relevance varied on a spectrum from conservative to radical; I detected four points of view.

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1. The humanities as practiced today are by their nature valid, as they have been in the past, and the consideration of any direct application of scholarship to politics, behavior, or living culture is a threat to the objectivity and seriousness of research.

2. The humanities already have found the means for making effective decisions and commitments in today's world, and the problem is primarily to train more scholars who will remain in the forefront of their fields and open to innovation.

3. A change in the approach and content of scholarship and teaching is essential, but the problem of effecting it without abandoning the valid traditions of learning should be the chief aim of our discussions and papers.

4. The crisis is imminent, and proposals for fundamental academic and administrative changes in higher education, some already made by the supporters of this view, should provide models for reform.

Each of these positions is related to an attitude toward the new generation of students as represented by its activist spokesmen. The first two do not see in the student movement a phenomenon that seriously challenges the philosophy of humanistic education, but rather an administrative and legal headache; the third interprets it as a manifestation of more general cultural dislocation, and seeks changes through a dialogue between teachers and students that would accommodate the interests of both parties; and the fourth regards student activists as allies in the effort to restructure the organization and goals of the university.

The seventeen contributors who have written essays for this issue offer a variety of outlooks and of professional skills fairly representative of the forty-five participants in the conferences; their papers are grouped into three sections, discussing:

I. The role of the humanities in higher education;

II. The practice of the arts in relation to education;

III. Particular problems in specialized fields of the humanities.

Preceding and following the second group are selections from the transcripts of the two conferences that refer to many of the more important issues discussed, including the attempt of a subcommittee

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of the first conference to formulate a definition of the humanities. This project was not revived, because the majority preferred to encourage the recent trend in higher learning away from restrictive categories and to gather under the umbrella of humane studies all disciplines that seek an understanding of man.

I

In the first section, six responses to the theme of relevance illustrate the variety of conceivable relevances. Each author proposes new ways of dealing with the material of his field or new perspectives on the humanistic tradition. Most of this group, whom I should call the generalists, belong to the progressive wing of their disciplines and are incisively critical of present practices in scholarship and teaching. This is particularly true of the critics of modern literature—Blau and Shattuck. I was persuaded at the conferences that the content of contemporary literature itself forces its interpreters to become involved in highly charged issues of contemporary culture and society, and must make it difficult to maintain the same degree of detachment as is possible in discussing either literature earlier than the nineteenth century or more abstract forms of expression, such as music or painting. Walter J. Ong generously agreed to preface his paper with a review of the charges made against the practice of humanistic learning and teaching at the second conference, and to comment on their implications for the future; his observations introduce most of the major themes taken up in later papers. His own contribution starts with an intriguing characterization of earlier classical study as a male puberty rite, and proceeds to observations on the changing uses of the past in an era that unavoidably accumulates knowledge and attempts to digest it in a synchronic present; at such a moment, history becomes individual experience. The fact that Leo Treitler, a musicologist, criticizes historical method from a wholly different position—the loss of individuality in historical schemata—shows that specific problems in the several fields can be quite dissimilar.

G. Jon Roush seeks a fresh approach to tradition, suggesting that until recently education in the humanities was thought of as the transmittal from generation to generation of the traditions of Western culture, in the belief that permanent values reside in the great works of the past and that these must be applicable to present conditions. In place of this concept of a "syncretic" tradition, he

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offers a "dialectical, personalistic" approach, modeled on Montaigne and others, that regards the educational process as a dialogue between teacher and student, one in which values and judgments are not imposed or perpetuated by authority, but become the object of a mutual exploration.

Herbert Blau's apocalyptic message has the most radical implications of any in the issue; it insists that we come to terms with many of the goals of the student revolution because they make concrete the appeal for spiritual freedom that pervades the literature we have been teaching and analyzing for half a century. Mr. Blau contrasts the vitality of the experience of the younger generation with traditionalism in research, and suggests that since the teacher stands to learn from the student, education must become an interchange within a group.

Roger W. Shattuck's paper, written as a memorandum for the initial conference, begins by examining the process of learning, which he defines as the correction of error, the making and breaking of patterns, and proceeds to suggest some intriguing breaking techniques: the collaboration of artists and scholars in the same field; the study of language through intelligent reading (as against grammar, colloquial speech), and especially reading aloud; an effective argument for introducing dance into the focal curriculum of higher education—all supporting his contention that the functions of the intelligence are undivided.

Dr. Robert Coles, a researcher and clinician in child psychiatry, is the sole contributor from outside the humanistic disciplines. He movingly demonstrates that the borderlines of the humanities are arbitrary; wherever man and his works are the object of attention, there is humane learning. Dr. Coles' paper uses his experience as an observer and participant in civil rights and educational projects in the southern states to demonstrate how literature, the arts, and music contribute directly to the amelioration of social ills.

R. J. Kaufmann's examination of the "psychological imperialism" of the humanist provides a fitting conclusion to the discussions in the first section. It reveals with rare sensitivity the difficulties of the scholar who is at once open to change of approach and committed to firmly established critical and historical attitudes. Mr. Kaufmann challenges scholars to initiate the uncertain quest for a new definition of our needs in place of the exercise of our accomplishments; "humanism," he concludes, "is a poetic, not a philosophy."

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II

We have included a portfolio of four reproductions from the graphic work of the artist contributors to this issue partly because we believed that this clue to their approach in their preferred media would help readers to interpret their statements, and partly because getting good works of art into print on any pretext justifies itself.

Jesse Reichek's pen and ink drawing lends itself to printed reproduction even when reduced to about one quarter of the original size. The apparently incomplete biomorphic forms that appear in different contexts in a rigid geometric framework are variations of a theme that illustrates the complexity possible within the confines of three tones and a limited vocabulary of shape.

Eric Martin explains that his plate is "a *composite* sketch of a few drawings in a longer computer graphics sequence of image playback. In effect, a series of stages of a drawing is originally drawn into the computer freehand with a 'light pen,' or electronic stylus. The computer then plays them back separately, rapidly, as a dynamic sequence. Five stages are present in this drawing."

The page from the score of Leon Kirchner's Quartet #3 ought to appear in a color reproduction, since all the median tones are brightly colored in the original. The quartet is the first in which Mr. Kirchner combined strings with electronic tape, and this explains the unconventional character of the score; the shapes and colors, used as cues for the performers, are also prompted by exuberance and visual imagination.

The original of Wolf Kahn's landscape pastel is roughly twice as long as the illustration, and is done in gray pastel of a somewhat lighter value than appears. Mr. Kahn is one of the few contemporary artists who use pastel effectively and who enjoy working directly from and in nature, though landscape painting has again become a lively genre after an extended eclipse.

The artist participants contributed an essential element to both conferences, calling attention to the fact that while their role in higher education has been recognized by their presence on campuses throughout the country, academic traditions and the structure of the curriculum have limited their effectiveness. Verbal and mathematical languages remain the acceptable vehicles and proof of learning, and the practice of the arts is admitted only as an ornament. That position, the subject of a portion of the transcript of

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the second conference, is not restated in the four papers of Section II, which are addressed primarily to particular issues that confront the artist as teacher and practitioner.

Composer Leon Kirchner demonstrates with penetrating quotations from creators in diverse fields the limitations of specialized analytic knowledge as a means of developing the whole person, and suggests that our educational system promotes the capacity to talk about things rather than to experience fully the things themselves. He is not attempting to diminish the function of interpretation, but to make it richer by providing a more comprehensive education emphasizing understanding more than knowledge.

Wolf Kahn encounters a special challenge in the night classes of a New York City art school. Because he is trying to train future artists rather than to expand the horizon of liberal arts students, he believes that he must encourage students to arrive at a self-awareness and an outlook that are not calculated to produce objective judgments. He shares Mr. Kirchner's view that education is now preoccupied with knowledge for its own sake, unleavened by enthusiasm; on this account, he says, the university is not the right place for training artists.

Jesse Reichek, who has initiated at Berkeley courses generated by student interest in the black community, describes his approach to painting and his proposals for educational reform and the "developmental, afocal" principle that governs both. He attacks existing curricula and faculty attitudes as oppressive and elitist, and proposes the addition of new options within the universities alongside the existing ones, in which students with strong commitments will choose their own program, subject matter, and approach.

Michael O'Hare, speaking for the architect and engineer, addresses humanists as a practitioner who needs a helping hand. He discusses the failure of professional education to cope with the ethical and aesthetic issues raised by building for the modern city and calls for humanists to take an active part in formulating the standards on which solutions can be based and to participate by consulting with professionals and by assisting professional faculties in the criticism of student work.

III

The authors in the third section examine the function in higher education of their special fields—Classics, art history, and musicol-

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ogy. Because their papers were first presented in advance of the initial conference, they give an insight into the private ruminations of scholars on the problem of maintaining the right equilibrium between tradition and change in specialized disciplines. A major theme of their papers is that certain traditional approaches remain valid while others are institutionalized vestiges that threaten the vitality of future teaching and scholarship; they suggest ways of distinguishing between the two, and examine the implications of their choice.

The papers from representatives of the modern languages did not find a place here, partly because the participants represent a trend in their studies away from philological and documentary research toward a broader criticism that reaches out into other fields, particularly the social sciences, and partly because their material, being largely post-Renaissance, is more naturally adapted to interpretation in contemporary terms. If the authors in this section appear less disposed to radical and rapid shifts of direction, it is because the effectiveness of scholarship and teaching in their fields depends on the continued application of philological, documentary, and archaeological techniques. Art history and musicology, being comparatively young disciplines, are still occupied in the research required to uncover and identify the works with which they deal, and this process is an essential preamble to expanded critical approaches.

Gerald F. Else is the only contributor who calls attention to the fact that in earlier centuries the humanities—which were equivalent to the Classics—constituted a practical discipline that equipped students not only to read, write, speak, and persuade, but also to govern and exercise moral discrimination. Education then was not democratic, but it was relevant. His proposal that the proliferation of humanistic disciplines in modern times and their divorce from training in language skills have destroyed both their utility and their moral impact sets the stage for the more sanguine assessments of Messrs. Whitman and Putnam. In Cedric Whitman's eloquent eulogy of modern classical studies, the most ancient of the humanities emerges as a paradigm for evolution within the frame of tradition. Mr. Whitman argues persuasively that radical changes of approach are unnecessary because the discipline, by virtue of the variety of its approaches and the richness and breadth of its material, has demonstrated the capacity to remain a powerful resource for modern man. More specific illustrations of this point are given

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by Michael C. J. Putnam, who suggests that the right choice of classical works and the proper use of new techniques can be meaningful in our time without the sacrifice of rigor. Liberated from the task of providing models of the virtuous life and from the burden of being a required subject, the discipline offers its students an ideal opportunity for articulating their ideas and aims.

In his examination of the artificial conflict of scholarship and evaluation in art history, Leo Steinberg discusses in greater depth and with telling examples the problem I have taken up in the concluding essay. He reveals the futility of supposedly objective conclusions in interpreting works of art, and shows how our experiences of modern life and art make us sensitive to aspects of the art of the past that escaped earlier scholars.

John M. Rosenfield's discussion of approaches to the history of art is less concerned with the limitations of existing scholarly attitudes than with the possibilities for the future; it offers guidelines for teaching and scholarship that admit subjective judgment without abandoning the rigor of traditional method: first, a commitment to the "poetic powers" of the work of art; second, a pursuit of the objective data defining its historical position; and third, an attempt to grasp the values and goals that brought the work into being.

Because Leo Treitler's special field of medieval music is more likely to seem esoteric in these times than any of the others represented in these essays, he is particularly sensitive to the obstacles created by traditional methods of research and education. His prime target, like G. Jon Roush's, is the critical technique based on historical process which, he believes, devaluates the quality of works of art by overemphasizing the dynamics of style development and deflects attention from the intrinsic character of individual compositions.

I have attempted in my concluding paper to characterize the conflict of intellectual styles that is widening the breach between the older and younger generations in the universities and to resolve it by combining the strengths of both through a redefinition of the goals of higher education consistent with the democratization of learning and the increased influence of the universities.

The working title of the first conference was "The *Condition* of the Humanities," but the term seemed somehow too tentative and the *Future* quietly took its place. Actually, both titles describe

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the content of this issue: On the one hand, the papers document the reaction of concerned members of the academic community to a crucial moment in the evolution of higher learning; on the other, they offer a variety of proposals for reformulating the attitudes and methods of research and teaching in the future.

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I. General

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WALTER J. ONG

Crisis and Understanding in the Humanities

I. *Charges*

THE HUMANITIES have a way of overlapping one another, and so do the charges brought against them. With some allowance for overlap, in the transcript of the discussions at the *Dædalus* conference on the future of the humanities one can identify some sixty-odd charges and subcharges that the humanities today must answer if their case is to be cleared. (One of the charges is that they want their case cleared.) Here I shall attempt not to itemize all the charges and subcharges, but rather to indicate areas in which these cluster before moving on to consider how it might be feasible to think of the humanities today. The charges against the humanities cannot, I think, be dealt with unless we revise our understanding of how the humanities relate to the human life world, historically considered, and unless we become aware that the humanities do not yet know enough about themselves.

Predictably, the most recurrent of the charges against the humanities strike at what is most vital and precarious in the humanities—the relationship between their subject matter and the rest of life. These charges focus on the interchanges where art and actuality, literature and life, play and work, academic commitment and civic obligation come together and at the same moment diverge. The charges call up, in an endless variety of forms, the question: What do the humanities have to do and what should they have to do with the day-to-day business of living in our present world?

This question, even in this simple form, can be contracted or expanded pretty much at will. One can take it to refer to the humanities in the restricted sense—that is, to the study of man's

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own creative or imaginative works. These consist of verbal creations, oral or written, as well as of art, music, the dance, and so on. Even this sense is somewhat protean, for the range of "creative" or "imaginative" varies. It would certainly include in some way architecture and many crafts, but how far the meaning is to be carried into such areas as road-building, cookery, yoga, and mountain climbing is matter for discussion. One can also take the humanities in the larger sense as the study of man in his relationship to the entire human life world, thus including such subjects as philosophy and anthropology and history. And once history is admitted, almost everything can be got in, directly or indirectly, under one or another perfectly honest rubric.

The *Dædalus* conference in fact focused chiefly on the humanities in the restricted sense, but so as to include history, which, of course, takes the pinch out of the restriction. Even if we do not count history, however, the temper of the conference was not exclusive. Yoga and mountain climbing did make their way into the discussion. The temper of this present paper is intended to be the same as that of the conference.

The Humanities and the Rest of Actuality. The charges under this general heading against the humanities today are urgent and wide-ranging. Many students challenge the entire humanistic enterprise, and they do so, some analysts feel, because humanistic studies are not effectively related to extracurricular life. The failure here can take several forms. The one which today perhaps leaps first to the eye is failure in activism: The humanities are not responsive enough to political, social, and educational crises. Some even feel that responsiveness alone does not suffice: The humanities as taught do not sufficiently exacerbate conflicts as they should and as extra-academic trends do. Desperation, and often only desperation, can lead to transfigured joy. Too many humanists protectively insulate their subjects from ongoing cultural crises. They encourage retreat from activist movements outside the classroom. Good teachers will testify that even in the classroom a public disaster, such as the assassination of Martin Luther King, far from showing up Henry James as irremediably arcane, has actually made him more urgent.

One of the advantages of having artists on campus is that artists, in contrast with many humanist scholars, do often form far-out nuclei around which students can take positions. The art

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world is with it. Action paintings and other happenings advertise the urgent connection between creativity and contemporary history. Humanists should be willing to put their bodies on the line.

The relationship of humanistic studies and good citizenship is often at stake here. This relationship, it is charged, has been insufficiently reflected upon, is left vague, and is rendered still more vague because we do not adequately understand what being a good citizen means or can or should mean in our age. Many feel it must mean public commitment on public issues. Students are helped if teachers are publicly committed. Movies are particularly relevant here. The reluctant and then often inept incorporation of film criticism into the curriculum goes to show how laggard the humanities can be.

But this activist critique itself does not go unchallenged, for some feel that activist over-response to political, social, and educational crises shows a failure of nerve and dedication in the humanities. They call attention to the fact that activism is often make-work and indeed is chiefly taken up by humanities students who have no clear objective yet in view: Professional students with more identifiable goals have shouldered too many responsibilities to allow for this freewheeling expenditure of time. Individuals do indeed have obligations as citizens as well as obligations as humanists, but the two sets of obligations are not the same. As one critique put it, the humanist teacher as teacher should not feel responsible for the slums of Roxbury, although he should feel deeply responsible for the attitudes that his students have toward the very existence of slums. Humanists only deceive themselves if they think that their function is to make immediately recognizable physical changes.

Looking beyond the activist question, many would situate the cleavage between curricular and extracurricular life within the teacher and his way of relating to his subject. Too many teachers fail to convey any sense of the real world in which their own responses and students' responses to the material of their subject take form, although the artists or writers whose work they are dealing with do convey their own worlds, even while aesthetically transmuting them. The teacher not infrequently insulates his class and his subject from his own and his students' actual life, never daring to regard the realm of television and electronic guitars and newspaper headlines and politics and ghetto housing with the intent gaze he directs to the wit of Ben Jonson or Marvell or

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Rembrandt's light and shadow or Bach's fugal counterpointing. Such timidity or stupidity, of course, impoverishes the teacher's understanding of Jonson and Marvell and Rembrandt and Bach as well as of his own and his students' world. This critique implies no one-to-one correspondence between art and present workaday actuality, but it does affirm innumerable connections whereby art gives meaning to the workaday world and this world gives meaning to art. No one can mediate between the two unless he faces both honestly.

Cleavage between the humanities and the rest of actuality can also be due to a failure to relate the classroom treatment of a subject to the real subject as it exists outside the classroom. What is said in the classroom about the process of painting or writing may be miles from any painter's or writer's real activity or experience. Irrelevance of classroom treatment to the actuality of the work of art, of course, cancels out the relevance that the work of art itself has to other actuality. It also trivializes the subject. One way to remedy the situation might be for humanist scholars to attempt at least some work in the subject they teach—in this view a teacher of poetry is better off if he has had some experience writing poems, or an art historian if he has attempted some art work, and so on. The teacher need not arrive at professional expertise, although he should work toward it, but he should have experience in the medium.

Such experience would discourage the tendency to trivialize in another way by making too much of statable rules that a writer or musician or painter or architect supposedly follows. The catalogue of such rules is limited by critics' proficiency at abstract analysis and description, and there is no guarantee that the as yet unstated rules are not more central to the performance than those everyone talks about. On the other hand, particularly in music and art departments, the presumed need to master certain technical elements, with or without laboratory work, has led to too great rigidity and paralysis of student energies.

Other forms of trivialization making the humanities unreal are mechanization of chronology, scholarly nit-picking, and toleration of research ruts, such as the stock monograph on an individual artist or writer or musician or work. It is pretty universally recognized, however, that chronology, nit-picking, and monographs on individuals can be invaluable and tremendously stimulating when subordinated to imaginative interpretation.

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A final cluster of charges regarding failures of humanist scholars and teachers today to relate their subject matters to other actuality centers on their handling of values. Often scholars and teachers dodge problems of values, both in art itself and in the life to which art complexly relates. Humanists often do not face honestly the conflicts in values that their subject matter raises, do not examine how values are learned, fail to incarnate in their own outlook the real extracurricular conflicts, tend to dodge conflicts in ideas, and even to avoid abstract ideas as such. For these and other reasons, they are likely to be either insufficiently pluralistic in outlook or falsely irenic and syncretist in their pluralism. Related to pacific pluralism is the tendency to find total correspondence and consequently total adjustment between all phenomena in a given culture, a tendency that is at present so strong as to constitute a kind of humanistic Camp.

Parochialism, Universalism, Minorities, Revolution, Community. Another set of complaints points even more sharply at the present age than do those just reviewed. This set has to do with the relationship of subject matter and teaching to the social sense of our time, especially our feeling for a global society. One charge reads that although the humanities should educate for emotional and imaginative sharing with all men and all cultures, liberating and enlarging and universalizing man's potential for sharing the entire human heritage, they too frequently fail to do so. Foreign cultures are neglected. Even domestically, humanistic subject matter is often white-oriented—black art is treated as a special phenomenon, interesting because it is a variant, just as the social sciences treat blacks not as normal people, but as special problems, handled under "race relations." Racial minorities are underrepresented in student bodies at the higher levels of the humanities as elsewhere, and they are underrepresented as teachers. Although most humanists would object to the steadfastly parochial principle that only a black can teach literature written by blacks as much as to the principle that only a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant can teach Henry James, it appears evident to all that those close to any given culture can contribute awarenesses otherwise unavailable concerning works from that culture.

Although the humanities should encourage sensitive response to all human beings, scholars and teachers in the humanities can fail to open themselves not only to racial groups other than their

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own but also to various other groups. Nonhumanities majors are often neglected, as are students who begin or continue their education with no settled aim in view. The underprivileged generally are neglected.

Humanists should be more alert than they are to the socially unifying effects of the humanities well understood and interpreted. The arts can create community, enabling people to define themselves as communities or cultures. The humanities should make more of intersubjectivity and of participation. It is distinctive of our times that the audience often wants to get into the act. Energies really at work in our society have been neglected by overly academic minds. In particular, the humanities have failed to incorporate sufficiently within themselves the new perspectives in various revolutionary movements—for example, in ethnic and other subcultures. Too little is made of the virtuosity of Negro American culture in welding together the most diverse traditions, as Dorson has pointed out,[1] or of the Beatles' achievement in making art out of Liverpudlian nonart. A good number of artists and musicians and writers are responsive to the new revolutionary energies, but the academy and the practitioners are insufficiently in contact, although it would be prejudicial to lay the blame for this entirely on the academy.

Humanist scholars and teachers, moreover, often fail to respond to current movements dealing with the body and space. Not only have they neglected the liberating effects of dance, yoga, swimming, mountain climbing, and the like, but they have also done little or nothing to interest man in the power he should have over the spaces created in society by architecture and engineering, and in the human relationships that could or do result.

On the other hand, overvaluation of participatory activities and of the related workshop approach to learning, often fostered by stress on the social and experiential, can scorn purely verbal involvement, which, by and large, is perhaps the most liberating of all humanistic procedures for the largest number of persons.

Criticism as an Object for Study. Apart from the charges against the humanities relating to current social crises, those that are most distinctive of all for our present age have to do with the place of criticism—art criticism, music criticism, literary criticism, and so on—in humane studies. With reference to criticism, however, one meets less with charges against the human-

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ities than with concern and puzzlement over what the place of criticism should be.

Insofar as there is a complaint, it is that criticism itself is being studied to the neglect of works of literature, art, music, architecture, and other fields. This is bad because criticism is secondhand art. But such an observation elicits the immediate rejoinder that criticism, if authentic, is not secondhand anything, but as real as art itself and as worthy of direct study. If teachers and students turn to criticism rather than to works of art themselves, this attests a weakness in the art in question: Criticism is often where the action is today.

Both sides to the dispute seem to agree that art, music, literary, and other criticism has today attained a degree of complexity and richness hitherto unrealized. It is for the first time competing with its own object as a focus of attention. Moreover, criticism catches interest because of the art explosion, the by now well-known diversity of styles in all creative fields, and the need to interrelate them and to discriminate. Interrelating the diverse styles calls for interrelating whole cultures, so that critics of necessity extend themselves into every imaginable subject, with more or less proficiency or amateurishness, trailed by hordes of avid followers. With no formal philosophy requirements in most curricula, criticism masquerades as a universal wisdom, substituting for moral and political philosophy as well as for metaphysics and theology. Charlatanry is rampant, sometimes draped in scatology, less often in wit.

On the other hand, criticism is necessary because art implies something beyond itself and because the aesthetic distance demanded by an art object is tolerable only for a time: Art must be reintroduced by reflection into contact with extrafictional actuality or translated into its equivalents or analogues in such actuality. Moreover, criticism as complex as that today is itself a rich manifestation of culture, and the history of criticism can be a highly sophisticated and enriching pursuit. Besides, the students love it.

Teachers, Physical Conditions. By implication at least, most critiques of the humanities thus far rehearsed here include problems concerned with teaching personnel and physical conditions. But a few charges push directly into these specific areas.

Many other problems in the humanities would be solved if so

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many teachers were not dull persons, one critique insists. More effort should be made simply to create and recruit more interesting people. Even interesting people, however, can be dulled by a creeping conservatism fostered by an undue concern over one's personal career which masquerades as professionalism. Many humanists, interesting ones as well as dull ones, fail to speak out on issues related to their profession because they want to get ahead.

Groups underprivileged in other ways are likely to be underprivileged in their physical educational surroundings as well as in their teaching personnel. Reform is urgent here. But the charges noted above that humanists have not awakened to the possibilities of architectural and engineering planning for educational environments refer across the board, *mutatis mutandis,* to privileged as well as underprivileged settings.

Aims, Curriculum, and Achievement. If the aims and achievement of the humanities were easy to formulate, charges relating to them should come first in a paper such as this one. But since the aims and achievement are in fact very difficult to formulate because they are complex and embedded in the density of existence, the charges relating to them can climax this summary here, together with the related charges regarding curriculum.

Charges regarding aims, curriculum, and achievement tend to be sweeping rather than particularized. Humanistic research and teaching are insufficiently reflective and philosophical about their aims. Man's sense of history is changing; he is consciously making it today as much as studying it; and the humanist's sense of identity does not build sufficiently on this fact. Many things are going on today that could be, but are not, brought into the scope of humanistic studies. The curriculum is outmoded and, as noted above, resists even such accessible innovations as study of the film. The work of social and revolutionary forces has not been looked at for what it is worth. Has SNCC done some of the most important sociology of our times?

Paradoxically, on the other hand, the quite real achievement of the humanities is one of the things that holds them captive. They are content to proceed with the same business as before. On the other hand, it can be countered that the humanities have produced not merely self-satisfaction but also, quite deliberately, intense self-suspicion—the sense of desperate urgency and

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the drive to self-criticism that mark our times. Since Nietzsche, the humanistic enterprise has been publicly advertising that it itself should not be taken too seriously. A reason for this could be that the humanities are degraded by their own material, for the subject matter of the humanities—literature, art, music, architecture, and the rest—at one point or another always merges with that of the mass-produced stereotyped culture that the humanities should actually counter.

Humanist aims, in a further charge, are commonly distorted by maladjustment to actuality. Technology and machines are treated all too often as alien to the humanities, as bad dreams best forgot, rather than as part of human life to be mastered, improved, and used.

Finally, the achievement in the humanities, insofar as it is not merely a liability to itself but an asset to mankind, is not made known to many who for various reasons should know about it—such as the general public, congressmen, and the culturally underprivileged whether in the ghettos or in the achievement-powered suburbs, where the very word humanities may suggest some quaint import from an overprogrammed and stuffy past.

II. *Noetic Structures and Humanistic Relevance*

It would be ingenuous to respond to this array of charges by undertaking to "answer" them if by this we mean to exonerate the humanities. Most of the charges are to some degree true. They are, moreover, truer of some times and some places than of others. Merely to determine exactly where and how far they are valid would take more man-hours than we can afford. Why try to exonerate the humanities or humanists anyhow? The humanities and humanists are always going to work with uneven success, and we need all our energies to make them work better, not to prove how good they are. I propose to respond to the charges by simply accepting them as more or less valid and by examining some of the things that have happened in the humanities to give rise to the present state of affairs. By improving our understanding of where we are and how we got here, such examination should facilitate truly effective improvement. It should also, I hope, help resolve some of the conflicts in the charges regarding the nature of the humanities. Some of these conflicts, though not all, arise from factitious suppositions about the humanities' history.

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Charges against the humanities are likely to assume that the humanities are inherently more stable than they have been and that they must be prodded into changing as soon as possible because society has already changed before them. We need to be more generally aware than we are that the humanities have been far from stable and have themselves changed a great deal, both in the distant past and in recent years. They have perhaps altered as greatly as society itself has, although the changes may have been obscure or guarded and not always advantageous. We have often failed to discern the changes because we have not discerned adequately the varied ways in which study of humanities and man's other responses to actuality have interlocked. The interlocking is dismayingly complex. I shall consider here only how it has shifted in terms of some larger noetic structures which have held together man's life world.

The Knowledge Explosion

Growth in knowledge has probably been the principal agent working changes in the humanities. This growth has affected our very notion of the humanities by polarizing the notion in a different way. Today we tend to set off the humane against the mechanical. It was not always thus. Originally the cluster of concepts that has yielded our present "humanities"—*humanitas, litterae humaniores*, humane letters, and so on—was set off against the bestial. The humanities lifted man above the lower, unreflective, gross, animal, menial, slavish world of physical toil and made him a full reflective human being as distinct from brute beasts or from the large numbers of men whom pretechnological cultures assumed were condemned to a menial, animal-like existence. The humanities fostered the work of the intellect and thus raised man out of ignorance. Today the humanities are still assumed to make man more human, but they locate the threat that they must counter not in the animal world but elsewhere, in the world of machines. The humanities are commonly set off against science and its mechanistic offshoot, technology. The inhuman other is no longer a population of brutes to which man's lower, nonintellectual nature threatened always to hold him in bondage, but a population of nonliving things that he has made.

The growth in knowledge of the physical world that has created this state of affairs is often referred to as the "knowledge ex-

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plosion." But it is not the only growth of knowledge affecting the humanities. If the humanities have been repolarized against machines by the enlargement of the physical sciences, they have also been restructured internally by a comparable explosion of humanistic knowledge itself. Elsewhere I have tried to sketch this knowledge explosion in the humanities, where the sheer "quantity" of knowledge available in language, literature, history (of art, music, technology, science, philosophy, religion, theology, and so on, as well as cultural and psychological history), anthropology, the performing arts, and other subjects qualifying as humanistic, has become so vast as to be beyond description and is still accelerating its growth.[2] By far the greater part of this knowledge is hardly a century old. In many cases, an entire field of knowledge is even younger than that. Such is the case, for example, in art history, in modern literary analysis, and in the study of all but a handful of the hundreds of languages academically accessible today.

Growth of knowledge in the humanities has, of course, had profound effects on the relationship of the humanities to the entire human life world. Many of these effects lie back of our present crises. I should like to single out four that have especially altered noetic and psychological structures. These are the atrophy of puberty rites in humanistic education, the romantic cultivation of the unknown as an effect of the evolution of the communications media, the development of our sense of a synchronic present, and the anthropologizing of knowledge.

The Atrophy of Puberty Rites

Through the Renaissance and thereafter decreasingly up to the romantic period, humanistic studies, in the strict sense of the study of *litterae humaniores*, served the function of a puberty rite, at least in the schools of the West.[3] Puberty rites in primitive societies are educational procedures, *rites de passage* or initiation rites that take the young man (or the young woman) out of the family circle to prepare him (or her) for the extrafamilial life of the tribe. Such rites temporarily isolate the sexes and communicate to the young the appropriate lore of the tribe under trying conditions of duress and discomfort. The Latin-based humanistic studies coming out of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in the West were such puberty rites, though specialized

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ones undergone only by those entering a learned elite. Latin, we commonly forget, was a sex-linked language, taught, with the most negligible exceptions, only to males, and that outside the home in schools which were attended and taught only by males. (Girls often learned to read, but at home and in the vernacular.) Schools were normally run with elaborate rules enforced by severe physical punishment. The regular attribute of a schoolmaster in early woodcuts is the bundle of birch switches. Treatise after treatise on education mentions their use and recurrent abuse.

Latin grammar and rhetoric, with a bit of Greek, formed virtually the entire substance of the curriculum for six to eight years. Latin was the door to the secrets of the tribe—in this case guarded by the academic initiates, who were charged with the central cultural heritage.[4] Most learning was simply unavailable in the vernaculars, which indeed into the seventeenth century were still busy introducing words to express what was talked about in academic courses. (Much of Rabelais' infectious excitement over words connects with this state of affairs.) Taught the humanities under some duress—for the severity of physical punishment varied of course from place to place or master to master—and in a foreign language, the initiates responded by developing the resilient *esprit de corps* that puberty rites foster. They had trod the hard road of learning together. *Forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit,* they remembered from the *Aeneid,* "perhaps sometime it will be enjoyable to recall these hardships."

The feeling for humanistic studies as an initiation rite enforced by the old Latin-grounded education can no longer be engendered in our less polemic, more permissive, coeducational world. Today's teachers seldom declare the once conventional war on the students, for if they do, they lose face with their peers. And thus, since war there must be—because you cannot simply skip initiation if you want to become a self-respecting adult—the students have to declare conventional war on the teachers.

Attention to the initiatory quality of earlier humanistic education shows several things. First, it shows the complexity of "relevance." Initiation rites achieve supreme relevance often by prescribing precisely actions that have no apparent relevance at the time they are performed: The assumption is that their relevance can be seen only when one has crossed the border that the initiation rites mark—at which point the relevance then is commonly found to be largely symbolic. In primitive puberty rites a

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youth may, for example, be forbidden to touch any part of his body with his hands or may be made to fast or abstain from certain foods or to undergo severe beating. In the Renaissance, schoolboys were made to master a language that for most would have no practical use. In both cases what was achieved was largely a sense of belonging.

Secondly, the initiatory quality of earlier humanistic education reveals the nature of some problems concerning subject matter for the humanities. Much more is at stake—or may be at stake—than finding subject matter that is immediately satisfying or useful. We have to start with what is accessible, of course, for learning means proceeding from the known to the unknown. But the ultimate aim is to place the student in an area that he knows was previously inaccessible to him—and, in a way, the more inaccessible the better. This area must also be one where the lore of the culture is centered.

The content problem of the humanities today lies in finding a place where the lore of a culture—and now even the lore of all human cultures, as these merge into one—can be centered. If the humanities function as an initiation rite, an induction, an entrance into some area, what area are we to choose? There is no longer one narrow door through which all must pass to gain access to the spot where all the earlier initiates stand. There are hundreds of doors, all opening into corridors that connect with one another only through a maze. A recent poem by the British poet Adrian Henri well illustrates the state of affairs. It is made up of twelve stanzas, mixed quatrains and triplets. Here is a four-line sample:

> Belà Bartók Henri Rousseau
> Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns
> Lukas Cranach Shostakovich
> Kropotkin Ringo George and John

The entire poem is of this same substance, nothing but a list of name after name after name, with only an occasional "and" interspersed, running in crossdisciplinary zigzags from St. John of the Cross and Matthias Grünewald to Andy Warhol. The poem is quite conspicuously an initiation poem, a quest for identity, a do-it-yourself puberty rite. It is straightforwardly entitled "Me" and carries the subtitle "if you weren't you, who would you like to be?" After banging through the litany of names in response to this

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patently identity-crisis question, the poem whimpers to an end with the plaintive "and/last of all/me." Henri's piece is utterly representative of a widespread and now even conventionalized state of mind. It appears in a paperback got up with standard psychedelic jacket design under the title *The Mersey Sound.*[5]

Some of Adrian Henri's cultural heroes present perhaps only questionable credentials, but he whips up with his mixture a good deal of real excitement. The mixture suggests that the world into which our students step today is full of humanistic material and even humanistic fireworks, but that it is a terrifyingly vast world. Our poet, in fact, could have shown it to be far more vast than he does, for he has in fact taken a pretty provincial view, since his litany of persons to identify with includes only Western figures and is limited to those currently in fashion in undergraduate courses across the country or in the mass media.

The Romantic Cultivation of the Unknown

Ours is not the first age troubled by an overcharge of knowledge. Other ages have had the problem and have found some kind of relief. From one point of view, romanticism for example can be seen as a defensive response to such an overcharge, perhaps the major defensive response in past ages. The overcharge to which romanticism responded had been built up by print and had culminated in the Enlightenment, a heady experience of noetic power typified by the more than Olympian self-assurance of the "*Discours préliminaire*" to the Diderot and d'Alembert *Encyclopédie,* with its propensity to think of knowledge control reassuringly and not unpatronizingly in terms of "assembling" knowledge in a mental map (*mappemonde*) or geometrical layout (*système figuré*).[6] This kind of ambition, of course, stirred up strong subconscious fears and countermovements. It is noteworthy that the age immediately preceding the Enlightenment saw the first stirrings of hostility toward the printed book as such. The Renaissance had frequently attacked printers and publishers, chiefly for malfunction in reducing expression to satisfactory typographical condition. Indeed, dispraise of the printer or publisher was a standard topos of Renaissance rhetoric as this art manifested itself in prefaces. But the age of Swift and Sterne was the first to spoof the structure of the book as a physical object, its footnotes, indexes, and storage-and-retrieval apparatus generally—the very

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features that recommended the printed book to the visualist *Encyclopédiste* mind.

In the light of these preceding developments, it is possible to view romanticism as, among other things, a response to an overload of organized knowledge. Romanticism withdrew to a world of mystery, darkness, remoteness, and inaccessibility, the polar opposite of the world of the Enlightenment. But the Enlightenment had made this withdrawal possible. Romanticism would have been intolerable in earlier ages, which labored under a noetic economy of scarcity. It was feasible from the mid-eighteenth century on because, if romantic attention to the unknown and dark and mystifying ever became frightening, one could quickly recoup self-confidence by glancing back at the trim mass of well-organized knowledge on the library shelves. Today's avant-gardism—which in its cultivation of the different and strange is a specialized and seemingly permanent extension of romanticism, as the late Renato Poggioli has shown[7]—manifests the same relative insouciance of those who have as a matter of fact a great deal of knowledge under ready control. At the same time, this romantic avant-gardism affords relief from the pressure inevitably built up by having to deal with vast stores of knowledge. It provides a vacation from oppressive rationalism.

But the vacation time has now played itself out, and that because of the very success of the romantic movement. The remote, the seemingly formless, the purportedly unstructured, the dark, the vaguely limned areas of human consciousness have themselves become part of our noetic store, as massive and organized in their own way as the rational, structured areas were before. Consciousness of the unconscious is a permanent part of our thinking. In comparable fashion, the once remote past has become part of our present conscious life, and the geographically remote feeds into our local airports and enters our living rooms. The Mexico City Olympics come on live television broadcasts into St. Louis, Boston, and Seattle. The cult of the exotic has proved self-defeating. All remoteness is naturalized now. In the Adrian Henri poem just cited and in hundreds of similar outpourings, running from the high sophistication of Pound and T. S. Eliot down to echoic babbling in beatnik and now hippie poetry, many of the figures out of the once remote past still circulate, but they do so arm-in-arm with other figures out of yesterday's newspapers. The past lives no longer in its own time or in indeterminate,

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somewhat legendary "days of old." It lives in the synchronic present where everything lives today.

The Synchronic Present

Paradoxically, absorption of the past is what has given the present its own identity. Because we have access to so much history, this is the first age that has undertaken a concerted academic study of itself. Earlier, one always lectured on general, scientific principles or on something far removed in time—Plato, or Aristotle, not one's own contemporaries. But once knowledge of the past achieved a certain size or density, the present began to take on a distinctive face of its own. It now is seen to differ from the past, but does so in terms out of the past. In earlier ages when there was not enough historical background to project the present against, the present appeared largely inevitable, not something positively determined to be this rather than that, but rather a neutral circumambient medium, nonisolable, like water for a fish. Now, however, with knowledge of the past brought to the state it has reached in recent generations, the present can be examined for Renaissance, medieval, classical, preclassical, Christian, Hebrew, and countless other elements, or for its lack of one or another of these. Knowledge of the past thus bears in on us to define the here and now, where all ages thus meet. The resulting sense of a synchronic present is further intensified and deepened by our knowledge of the histories of a great many other cultures and how they accord with and differ from one's own. The complexities of American culture today, seen in terms of its past history, can thus be contrasted with the complexities of Japanese or Indonesian or Kwakiutl culture, seen in terms of their own past histories, too, as feeding into or not feeding into the present.

Not only in the world of learning and of art, but also in political life, technology, and clothing styles a distinctive sense of the present as present rides through contemporary culture. This sense has shifted the structure of the humanities, which now focus intently on ourselves in our own life world. Probably no other culture has ever had to bear the burden of so acute a self-consciousness as does the present United States. Coached into identity crises by psychiatrists whose livelihood depends on their studying adolescents, students stampede from personal self-scrutiny

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into the collective self-scrutiny of "American studies." Self-consciousness among us has reached such a pitch as to produce in the United States that unprecedented phenomenon, the autobiographical drama, seen in O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, and others. Nearly all literature today that takes itself seriously—and too much does—becomes confessional literature.

Our stampede into the present may prove self-annihilating if it crowds out firsthand knowledge of the past by neglecting the linguistic and other tools that make such knowledge possible. Humanistic studies can by default shrink the present once more to a flat and toneless surface. One of our problems today, not talked of much at the *Dædalus* conferences, is to provide a continuous supply of persons with the hard-nosed skills needed to study humanistic subjects other than oneself.

Meanwhile, in any event, our feel for a synchronic present fosters the demand for relevance in all studies today. Antiquarianism in history is dead. Its equivalents in other subjects are also dead. There is no longer any point in studying history or anything else as a whimsical assortment of anecdotes or a merely numerically sequential chronology, for everybody knows that the past has all had its effect on the present somehow, and to fail to expose the effect or effects is simply to condone or foster ignorance. History can indeed no longer afford to be merely retrospective. The questions that we put to the past to generate history for ourselves are our own questions—late-twentieth-century questions, not those of earlier ages. We might as well admit the self-interest that necessarily and quite honorably calls into being the history and the other studies this age needs at the same time as we acknowledge that the questions are fruitless unless we can do the grubbing research needed to understand other cultures on their own grounds.

Our historically based self-study (different from the rather atemporal self-study of earlier philosophy, as in the Stoic *gnōthi seauton*, "know thyself," and related rather to the self-study of Hebrew-Christian asceticism) has been responsible, certainly in part, for the hypertrophy of criticism reviewed earlier. The arts—literary, graphic, musical, and other—open into the archetypal consciousness, and depth psychology has taught us to bring the archetypes to focus on ourselves—if indeed it is even possible to attend to them without such a focus. A surprisingly large amount of the most insistent criticism today bears on contemporary works. Indeed, in literature at least the development of a New

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Criticism and the emergence of the sense of a synchronic present have developed *pari passu.*

The mass media, together with radically improved storage and retrieval systems, have intensified the sense of an active synchronic present by keeping afloat in the public consciousness vast stores of information concerning past, present, and future previously available only to the few and after years of study. The media and the storage and retrieval systems have, of course, not supplied the reflection that converts mere information into understanding and makes it truly serviceable. But the instant science and neatly topical philosophy of the slicks combine with round-the-clock newscasts and stereotyped radio and television analyses to make the present weighty and momentous, and, at the peak of its own adolescent self-consciousness, youth understandably finds itself either intoxicated or terrified or both.

If the demand for relevance in the humanities obviously connects with the feeling that we live in a synchronic present, the demand does no more than insist that the humanities live up to their best potential. Yet the demand to realize this potential is essentially dismaying. How can everything that is known in humanistic studies possibly be brought to bear on the here and now? And especially when one is thinking not merely of the resources of one individual culture—Western European, or Eastern Mediterranean, or United States culture, or Latin American culture in its manifold phases, or Chinese culture, or Polynesian culture, or the vast spectrum of African cultures—but of the resources of all these cultures simultaneously bearing in on us here and now in the United States or, for that matter, on man anywhere else in the world?

Whatever the answer, let us not pretend that the assignment to do *something* like this does not in fact bear down on us. The hippie imagination at its zaniest speaks for mankind here. Tom Wolfe's account of the Merry Pranksters recently at large in California, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test,* notes among the equipment of the Ken Kesey place: "Day-Glo paint . . . Scandinavian-style blond. . . . sculpture of a hanged man [redolent of Tarot cards, though this sculptured hanged man was seemingly right-side-up or at least not upside-down]. . . . Thunderbird, a great Thor-and-Wotan beaked monster . . . a Kama Sutra sculpture . . . ,"[8] with of course Indian beads and English boots. Against this is contrasted a "conventional" establishment, "a house or apartment

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decorated with objects of the honest sort, Turkoman tapestries, Greek goatskin rugs, Cost Plus blue jugs, soft lights—not Japanese paper globe lights, however, but untasselated Chinese textile shades . . . with Mozart's *Requiem* issuing with liturgical solemnity from the hi-fi."[9] Other than hippie in-group-out-group faddism, there is really little to distinguish the two cultural armories. Each is one more manifestation of modern technological man's quest for identity—in the case reported on by Wolfe complicated by an infantile quest for total security and acceptance in the face of every possible threat (activated by programmatically irresponsible behavior and recorded on tape and by movie so that the Pranksters can replay themselves and prove over and over again to themselves that they are not rejected—that is, not by one another).

It is of course fatuous to think that all human awarenesses and learning can become simultaneously present to every mind at all times, or even that most of it can be accessible to every mind at all times. Moreover, the demand for relevance frequently warps understanding of the past beyond all recognition: The Renaissance humanist is interpreted as a proto-revolutionary of the early-nineteenth-century sort or Cotton Mather as a Jeffersonian democrat. If the totality of humanistic awareness is to be accessible and relevant, it is going to have to be on some more general grounds. What can such grounds be? We cannot survey them all, but we can note some that have been well worked already and others where possibilities lie.

The Anthropologizing of Knowledge

One way in which cultures across the globe grow together in humanistic studies is simply through the natural development of concepts suitable for relating diverse cultures to one another. We are likely to forget the achievement we live with here. Terms such as civilization, culture, world-view, form criticism, literary history, and many hundreds more have no equivalent in classical or medieval or, for the most part, Renaissance language, for the concepts which they represent and which are the basis for intercultural awarenesses simply had not yet been developed. As these generalizing concepts have emerged, the humanities and all knowledge have become increasingly anthropologized or centered on man rather than on schemata. To a degree, even the humanities can

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be studied nonanthropologically in relatively abstract or schematic form, as, for example, rhetoric was studied from classical antiquity through the Renaissance. When classical or "grammatical" rhetoric was supplanted in the eighteenth century with a "psychological" rhetoric of the feelings and this in turn from the early 1930's on with a "sociological" rhetoric, the fullness of the human life world was increasingly honored.[10] In comparable fashion, psychology has been increasingly anthropologized as it moved from faculty psychology to depth analysis; philosophy has been anthropologized as it worked out from an epistemological starting point in Kant through to personalist existentialism today; and so have literature, history, and even grammar itself in its psychological connections. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's synthetic work undertakes further anthropologizing of all actuality by interpreting the entire globe (and eventually perhaps the entire cosmos) as "hominized" through the phenomenon of man. Teilhard's work shows, incidentally, that anthropologizing our interpretation of actuality is not the same as secularizing, but can proceed with an intensification of religious insight at least as well as on purely secular grounds.

Anthropology itself as a new science has been making itself more immediately relevant. Starting, as science always does, with what was most remote from the here-and-now human life world of the scientist himself, striking off into the South Sea Islands, Alaska, and Australia to report on the primitives, anthropology has lately been making its way home and forcing itself to do anthropological studies of the contemporary culture in which the science of anthropology itself originated. This is itself an impressive instance of movement into a synchronic present in a particular field.

Developments in many other fields of humanistic study similarly relate the remote and the proximate, or the past and present, in ways clearly encouraging a sense of relevance. Only a few such developments can be singled out as samples here. In the study of literature the message in T. S. Eliot's magistral essay on "Tradition and the Individual Talent" has by now pretty well been driven home. Critics and historians alike are aware that the new works of art both derive from a tradition and by their own presence alter the position of previous works in the tradition. The business of a contemporary writer is to take hold of the maximum in the tradition and transform it as completely as

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possible. Eliot did not invent this message, for it comes home of itself to anyone who understands the historical dimension of actuality, but he gave it its classic formulation. Artists and musicians today, as well as writers, are intimately aware of it and of course are tortured by it. It implies that, since they come later in history, they must know more about more predecessors than earlier artists ever did, and in an increasing diversity of cultures, and that they must nevertheless somehow bring off a new incarnation never before realized. Poggioli believed that through the entire foreseeable future this situation will perpetuate the avant-garde pursuit of the *outré*.

Here perhaps lies the theoretical basis, if one is needed—as perhaps it is not—for the participatory study of humanistic subjects that is plainly going to play some part in our educational programming for the present and future. If the present is the front of the past, engagement in creative or imaginative work in the present gives access to the past, which, when then turned to for its own achievements and values, can further interact with and enrich the present.

Readers can supply further instances of anthropologizing, but we cannot close this list without mentioning one of the most central of all—the interiorizing or hominizing of history as it grows from a study of external events to an account of the reorganizations of the human psyche.[11] Early history had tended to be political and military in content and more or less oratorical or ceremonial in manner. Human beings were indeed portrayed, but their relations to one another were stylized often in standard terms of virtues and vices. With Giambattista Vico we arrive at the explicit awareness that civil society has been made by men and that it somehow correlates with the structures of the human mind. This inward turn has been further pursued by Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, by Herbert Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization*, in other ways by the work of Stuart Hughes such as *Consciousness and Society*, and, most sweepingly, by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. It entails anthropologizing because it centers history not in the movement of materiel and the redefining of political boundaries, but in the human consciousness and in the patterned shifts in personality structures which in great part determine the externals of cultures and of history and at the same time are determined by these externals.

The current study of the communications media belongs with

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history of this sort, for the media in their succession from oral to chirographic and typographic and electronic restructure the personality, as has been shown not only by present-day psychological studies of oral cultures[12] as compared to literate cultures, but also by the study of epic singers undertaken by Albert B. Lord, following on Milman Parry, and by Havelock's study of the roots of Plato's philosophy in the slow shift from an oral to a functionally literate culture in ancient Greece.[13]

The relevance achieved in the humanities in the instances rehearsed here does not of course automatically become relevance in a particular classroom situation. These achievements can only lay the ground for particular classroom relevance, which is always going to have to be achieved by the individual teacher. But the teacher familiar with what has been going on in his field is in a very favorable position today. He has something to work with. Certainly matters do not stand where they did in the days of Quintilian or John of Salisbury or Erasmus or even Matthew Arnold. The humanities, we must keep ourselves aware, have changed greatly in the past and will still more in the future.

They do not change whimsically or without pattern. In the last analysis, it is the business of the humanities to discern and try to understand the patterns whereby they have altered themselves or been altered. The foundation for the relevance of the humanities today must be a humanistic understanding of the development of the humanities themselves in relation to past cultures and to today's cultures. If we can reach some understanding here, we can hope to achieve the insight into the present situation that will enable us to enlarge the humanities more—for example, by growing new areas of humanistic studies out of the resources of minority cultures in the ways so badly needed today.

If we can achieve a better historical understanding of where the humanities have stood and now stand today, we may grasp better the urgency of our present crisis. Some of the charges summarized in the first part of this essay were urged in a spirit of desperation. I believe myself that the situation is indeed desperate. But I do not feel thereby obliged to agree that it is more desperate than it used to be. I know of no time or place in the past where, if we attend to all human beings in a given culture and not to the small privileged class, the situation of the humanities was even remotely satisfactory. It is not more desperate

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today than before, but desperate in newly desperate ways. Moreover, acknowledgment of the desperate situation or even keen insight into its causes does not necessarily mean that we can ever solve the problems intrinsic to the study of the humanities. If the humanities are worth anything, desperation belongs to their texture, for they give us knowledge and experience of the tragicomedy of the human situation. They themselves do not stand outside this situation. They are part of it. It is by living on the brink of desperation that we are most truly alive.

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G. JON ROUSH

What Will Become of the Past?

THE HUMANITIES are not a group of "subjects" or "fields of study." They are a group of disciplines—if by "disciplines" one means a mode of investigating, judging, and acting. It is notoriously difficult to say what those disciplines have in common, but they share at least the task of connecting the past and present as they are manifested in the works and acts of men. As one who preserves the past and continually invigorates it for his contemporaries, the humanist is above all else a teacher, and the problems of humanism are invariably problems of education as well. The objective of a humanistic education is competence in the judgment of human creations, with that judgment informed by an awareness of pertinent historical contexts. It is, however, becoming increasingly difficult to achieve that objective for two reasons. First, the problem of obsolescence is impinging on the humanities in some special ways, and conventional humanistic pedagogy is not designed to meet that problem. Second, it is likely that our man-made environment is the most significant human creation of all time, in that it has the most immediate effect on men's lives and souls, and yet the traditional humanistic education provides little guidance for anyone who would evaluate that complex, changing environment.

The problem of obsolescence and the problem of dealing with our present environment both pose questions about the contemporary relevance of the past and of history itself. It is important that we understand what is at issue. The question is not whether we can still profitably read *The Oresteia* or *Il Principe*; the question is whether we owe them the automatic allegiance due to forebears or whether we are somebody else's children. As a teacher of medieval literature, I would insist that the study of Chaucer is its own reward, that *Troilus and Criseyde* is immediately relevant to anyone who

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understands it. As a humanist, however, I do not find that argument so easy to make. As a humanist, I should be able to assert, at the very least, a connection between *Troilus and Criseyde* and the present state of the art of verbal expression. I should be able to describe a pertinent tradition, and I should be able to educate students who will understand that tradition and continue to find it pertinent for the next fifty years. I should be able to assert that in order to understand how we have arrived here, it is *important* to read *Troilus and Criseyde*. To defend that assertion requires new thought about the uses of humanistic learning, for although we know more about the past than we ever have before, we find it harder than ever to say why it is worth the bother. The humanities deal with traditions that are considered instrinsically valuable, because they comprise objects, ideas, and events that embody characteristic and valuable perceptions of human life; yet those traditions do not seem so pertinent as they once did.

The difficulty is revealed clearly in undergraduate education in the humanistic disciplines, which is rarely based on any cogent idea of tradition. Nor is that surprising when one considers that the culture that the conventional course in the humanities "transmits" is in many ways not the one that the students have actually inherited. The problem is not simply that most of the students are being introduced to most of the materials for the first time. The real problem is that the typical curriculum in the humanities, no matter what its official rationale may be, has as its organizing objective the presentation of objects with which "any educated man should be familiar." It is intended as an initiation into the living mysteries, and perhaps it really worked that way when the humanities were the province of an elite, self-conscious class. For most undergraduates now, however, the house of the humanities seems not a sacred temple but a museum. In the anthropological sense of "culture" as a shared set of values, customs, and symbols, the artifacts in the humanities museum come from a culture radically foreign to the one in which the students have been reared and to which most of them are destined to return. That is why the museum had to be built in the first place.

But the teacher still sees the temple, and his role is not only curator but missionary. The teacher in the humanities often finds himself in the position of correcting the errors in his students' culture, and so like other missionaries he behaves toward his charges with a condescension born of frustration. Meanwhile the students, like natives the world over, repeat their catechisms until sundown,

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after which they are free to go off to their native rites. In short, modern courses in the humanities are usually remedial in intent, even at advanced levels, but the odds against their success are high.

Any undergraduate instructor in the humanities realizes his foreignness and usually takes some pride in it. He has two arguments to explain and justify it. First, the culture that he represents is in some significant sense better than the culture of the typical American. This argument assumes a goodness not culturally determined but intrinsic to objects themselves, so that the degree of goodness in objects from different cultures can be compared. To read Milton or Dante is more rewarding than to read the works of any living author. In fact, he argues that the artifacts of the humanities culture, because of their greater truthfulness or beauty, are actually more relevant to the essential life of the students than is most of contemporary culture—*The Reader's Digest*, United Artists, and Hugh Heffner all lumped together. The second argument runs as follows: The humanities culture is the historical antecedent of the students' culture, and consequently its foreignness is illusory. In this argument, the objects gain their significance from their importance in The History of Western Civilization, and an understanding of them is necessary for any understanding of this age.

These arguments fail, however, because students usually have the good sense not to be taken in by them. They both rely on three common assumptions: the assumption of identifiable and permanent standards and values, the assumption that those values reside in or are exemplified by specific objects, and the assumption of a continuous, sacrosanct past. Those assumptions have been always debatable and often debated, but today they are being challenged with special force. That challenge is one of the chief differences between earlier cultures and this one—the culture that has nourished our students and, to a lesser degree, us. Those three assumptions, which worked so well for Matthew Arnold, have been called into question by a number of changes that seem to have separated us irrevocably from Arnold. The most important of those changes is the growth of a worldwide and culturally pervasive technology, with its attendant democratization of education and power. Traditionally the *studia humanitatis* have been the concern of a select group within the society. It was possible to maintain that situation until after World War I and to pretend to maintain it until after World War II, but the situation has changed with the expansion of education and leisure. In the past, the values of the many seemed inimical to the

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best judgment of the few in matters intellectual and artistic. We have now assumed responsibility for democratizing that judgment, and it seems unlikely that we can do so without changing the nature of the values.

Apparently one of the changes in values which is ensuing is the acceptance of technology's commitment to change. The idea of progress by revolution and invention has led to the acceptance of the idea of the irrelevance of the past, at least the past that preceded the latest quantum jump. Like the scientific jumps, the artistic jumps seem to be coming closer and closer together, and it is difficult to disagree with Marshall McLuhan's argument that the culture of the present will look more and more like a throw-away culture, without past and without future.

Like culture, man himself has come to be viewed in many ways as an ahistorical phenomenon, although the humanities generally have not been able to cope with this view. Certain disciplines that are essential to a contemporary definition of man—psychology, anthropology, biology, sociology—all offer ways to study man outside his historical setting and all are normally excluded from humanistic curricula. Even when they offer tools for objective historical research and for objective statements about change itself, these disciplines seem to render irrelevant the older historical myths in which the past is a guide to the present. The mythic theme that until recently justified the work of artists and historians is the theme of regeneration, in which the past dies to live again in the present:

> For out of olde feldes, as men seyth,
> Cometh al this newe corn from yer to yere,
> And out of olde bokes, in good feyth,
> Cometh all this newe science that men lere.[1]

In the new studies of man, however, understanding comes not from old books, but from "the data," the here and now.

Moreover, even in the disciplines that are recognized as humanistic, the old certainties about the nature of our past seem increasingly insubstantial as we turn to new sources and create new traditions. Not for centuries have Westerners looked to Asia and Africa for artistic and moral guidance as they now are beginning to. The two generations that produced men like Pablo Picasso, Henry Moore, Ezra Pound, Martin Buber, and Carl Jung have spelled an end to the self-sufficiency of the Greco-Roman tradition. Whatever

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will replace it will not be so neatly linear as that tradition was once thought to be.

Each of these changes in its own way enforces a new relativism, a sense that values emanate from the perceiver and that each man carries the burden of constructing his own past. Thus each of them contributes to the invalidation of the conventional assumptions justifying the humanities. They do not make the works of the past meaningless or uninteresting; but they do call into question their historical and cultural relevance, the assumption that specific objects exemplify permanent standards that taken together form a continuous tradition behind us.

To understand fully the difficulties that this relativism creates for the humanist-teacher, it is necessary to understand the difficulties that it creates for the humanist-scholar. For the man who accommodates to these changes, it would be easier to describe the structure of something like an event or a society or a language than to evaluate its substance. He could see significant analogies between prehistoric Greece and modern Tibet, between television and communications within African tribes; but he would find it harder to evaluate Greek justice or television drama. Being unwilling to ascribe any certainty to the values of his own age, he would be free to appreciate archaic art in its own terms, but would have difficulty settling the conflicting claims of that art and his own. He would be aware of a wide range of pertinent history, but uncertain about the pertinence of history itself. His view of the past would emphasize discontinuity, and it would be more important that something had happened than that it had happened at a specific time. This discontinuity would also complicate the business of evaluation, because it would call into question the conventional use of the past as a wellspring of wisdom and standards. Finally, even if he were to look to the past for guidance, he would have a confusing array of pasts to choose from and not just those two that seem to descend in a straight line from Greece and Israel.

In such a situation there is no clear historical context to apportion significance among works of the past, and it is all too easy to retreat into Alexandrian pedantry in which all objects of study become equally legitimate, and the only praiseworthy discovery is the cleverness of the scholar himself. With this fragmented vision of the past, the scholar becomes an antiquarian and the teacher a purveyor of bonbons. The dilemma we face, then, is clear: To abandon the ordered house of tradition is to step into what seems an absurd

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world of superficial flux and profound stagnation; but, on the other hand, the sense of tradition that has sustained humanistic study until now does not seem adequate to this age. If that dilemma is to be resolved, the most important challenge facing humanists now is the reconstruction of the very idea of tradition. Whatever form that reconstruction will take, it will not succeed unless it answers the needs of both scholarship and education, since both of those activities invigorate traditions.

Earlier humanists dealt with two notions of tradition, and one of them will not do—the idea of a syncretic tradition, which posits that truth is a discoverable unity and that when you have the key, you can show that all wise men in the past either have seen the one truth in their own way or else have erred. Syncretic thought shaped the idea of the humanities. The humanities have conventionally been seen as a group of disciplines concerned with the study of a tradition whose character, chief exemplars, and progress are continuous and fairly well defined and whose value is beyond serious question. It is a tradition that accommodates to the differences among its members so that it can assimilate, for example, both Rabelais and Cardinal Newman with a minimum of friction. Yet no matter how eclectic the tradition may be, there will always be certain works or ideas which cannot be accommodated, which are beyond the pale. Consequently, such traditions are defined not only by what they include, but by what they exclude, and critics whose bias is toward the syncretic idea of tradition, like Berenson, Eliot, and Leavis, spend a great deal of effort identifying who is in and who is out. The criteria are usually explicit and assumed to be universal. In all of these respects, the purest Renaissance spokesman for the syncretic view of tradition was perhaps Pico della Mirandola, whose sense of tradition was both widely eclectic and narrowly self-serving: "Taken altogether, there is absolutely no controversy between ourselves and the Hebrews on any matter, with regard to which they cannot be refuted and gainsaid out of cabalistic books, so that there will not be even a corner left in which they may hide themselves."[2]

For the modern man whom I have described, the traditional idea of a syncretic tradition would be of little use. The sense of belonging to a tradition requires that one understand how one got where one is and where one is going, or at least what the next natural step would be. But in a relativistic and divergent age, the old ideas about how we got here no longer seem appropriate; nor do curric-

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ula based on the history of the West. In fact, although the study of history remains a humanistic discipline, the idea of history as the organizing thread of human endeavor may be a historical accident and an anachronism.[3] If the past does become relevant to a man who lives through the next fifty years, it will happen because he has been able to fashion his own statement of meaning and test it against others, not because he feels heir to one past or another. He will not want or be able to deal in received opinions.

Another type of tradition does seem more promising, however, as a way of giving meaning to the past. Rather than being concerned with accommodation, it is dialectical and personalistic. In this view, one participates in a tradition not as a discoverer but as an artist whose one final truth is his own and for which he is accountable to the past but in his own way. Whereas a syncretic tradition tends to submerge differences, a dialectical tradition seeks out differences, plays with them, and demands that men make choices among them. In literature, the syncretic style is a mixture of judiciousness and self-righteousness; the dialectical style also begins with judiciousness, but moves between irony, familiarity, and confrontation, as in the writing of its clearest Renaissance exponent, Montaigne.

Montaigne's emphasis on self-knowledge seems to lead him to the dialectical view of tradition, and in that also he is typical of those who share that view.[4] Montaigne, like his model, Socrates, insists that his skepticism is consonant with traditional piety, and also like Socrates he regards tradition as a continuing process that thrives on self-assertion followed by correction. He learns by talking to people, so that growth becomes a communal activity. That undercurrent, important throughout his essays, illuminates a characteristic of the idea of a dialectic tradition. "I do not teach, I relate,"[5] he says, and Montaigne's relating is a social act of an intensity foreign to most teaching. It assumes the active participation of an audience: "I would have my voice not only reach my listener but perhaps strike him through. . . . A speech belongs half to the speaker, half to him who hears it. The hearer should let the form of its delivery prepare him for its reception; as, with tennis players, the man who takes the service shifts his position and makes ready according to the movements of the striker and to the nature of the stroke."[6] The image of a game is apt, because it underscores the peculiar social tension essential to the dialectic. Images of fighting and love-making are signs of kinship among men like Montaigne, Blake, and Whitman, who share the ambivalence toward the past characteristic of the

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dialectic view of tradition and for whom intense human intercourse seems almost a surrogate for the certainty of a satisfactory and instructive past. That intensity may sometimes be an end, but usually it is a means, the prerequisite of knowledge. Here is Montaigne: "I like strong and manly acquaintanceships and society, a friendship that prides itself on the sharpness and vigor of its dealings. I like love that bites and scratches till the blood comes. It is not vigorous and free enough if it is not quarrelsome, if it is polite and artificial, if it is afraid of shocks and is constrained in its ways: 'for there can be no discussion without contradiction.' "[7]

For these men, the past is not unimportant in their search for self-understanding, but it is important in a special way. In a syncretic tradition, the past is important as a linear succession that we should be able to retrace to our roots; in a dialectical tradition, the past is a home for one set of loving antagonists who can inspire, correct, or be corrected or rejected by us. A dialectical tradition is not so much a history as a mode of social behavior, an *agon*. Dialectical traditions, like syncretic ones, are regenerated in the present, but for dialectical traditions, regeneration is much more a communal act. Any notion of tradition assumes an identifiable community that is both the recreator and the audience of the tradition, but in the dialectical much more than in the syncretic, the community *is* the tradition, and the tradition is alive only in the interaction of its participants. This idea of tradition has proved especially congenial to Americans, and Walt Whitman, addressing the poets and philosophers of Europe's past in *Democratic Vistas*, suggests why:

> Ye powerful and resplendent ones! Ye were, in your atmospheres, grown not for America but rather for her foes, the feudal and the old—while our genius is democratic and modern. Yet could ye, indeed, but breathe your breath of life into our New World's nostrils—not to enslave us, as now, but, for our needs, to breed a spirit like your own—perhaps (dare we to say it?) to dominate, even destroy, what you yourselves have left! On your plane, and no less, but even higher and wider, must we mete and measure for to-day and here. I demand races of orbic bards, with unconditional uncompromising sway. Come forth, sweet democratic despots of the west![8]

For Whitman the quality of a tradition is defined by the quality of the community that is living it. Speech belongs half to him who hears it, and a dialectical tradition is the activity of live men talking with and adapting to one another and their predecessors.

Not only has this idea of tradition, with its emphasis on com-

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munal interaction, influenced American thought and letters, but it has had some impact on American education, thanks primarily to the brilliant synthesis of John Dewey. Dewey's philosophy of education, as he says in summarizing *Democracy and Education*, "connects the growth of democracy with the development of the experimental method in the sciences, evolutionary ideas in the biological sciences, and the industrial reorganization, and is concerned to point out the changes in subject matter and method of education indicated by these developments."[9] Dewey sees a democratic community as the only defense against the fragmenting force of Western industrial individualism, providing the only context within which men can criticize and alter the very ideas that the community holds dear. Conflict and diversity are not dysfunctional in such a community, but rather are necessary for its vitality. Thus, in a democracy, conflict and diversity should be a *sine qua non* of education.

Despite Dewey's influence, however, much remains unchanged, and as we move into a post-industrial, or at least a post-Arnoldian, civilization, a well-fashioned theory of humanistic education based on such a communal dialectic would be very useful. It could provide a systematic way of dealing with the diverse and fluid quality of our pasts and our presents and for preparing students to continue to do so in the future. It may seem strange that anyone feels the need to stand up for diversity and conflict when humanism has always been characterized by a tolerance for differences of opinion, but to take this idea seriously in education could seem threatening to many people. I confess that it sometimes seems so to me. It suggests that the function of teachers and scholars is not to transmit, but to challenge and be challenged. It suggests that their ultimate objective is not a better understanding of their material, but a better understanding of one another, of their students, and of themselves. It suggests that their strategy is to give students opportunities for making significant choices and at the same time holding them responsible for the choices they have made; it would produce educational imperatives for giving students power over matters pertinent to their education.

In short, to take such a theory seriously, one would be forced to ask radical questions about the way matters are normally handled now. I am in love with Chaucer, and love, I know, is a fine thing. I never had much trouble with the question: "Why do I read Chaucer?" Why do I cherish my family or eat oranges? But I have had

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difficulty answering the question: "Why do I teach Chaucer?" What, in fact, does it mean to say: "I teach Chaucer"? Does it mean simply to be a matchmaker, to bring Chaucer to students so that they, too, can fall in love with him? To be a matchmaker in that way is no small accomplishment, perhaps, but why Chaucer? There are any number of attachments students could form, and who am I to say that they should spend their time falling in love with Chaucer rather than Shakespeare or biophysics or dogs or one another? Such loves are sometimes mutually exclusive.

The question makes sense only in the present context of the American academy, where *to teach* usually means to act like an inviolable expert whose task is to put his students through his paces. Assuming that definition of teaching, let me rephrase my question: What *right* do I have to teach Chaucer? What right do I have to tell adults past the age of consent what they should know or whom they should love? I refuse to accept the notion that I have the right because Chaucer is good, or because I know more than my students, or because they will be grateful to me subsequently. If I want to work within a dialectical tradition, there seem to be only two conditions under which I have the right to teach anyone anything: when he asks me to or when a community of which he is a member agrees that whatever I am teaching is something he should learn. On most campuses today, neither condition obtains.

Many American colleges were founded on the explicit understanding within the founding community that certain things should be taught, and on the implicit understanding that students did not know enough to ask voluntarily to be taught the right things. The things to be taught were generally dictated by the genteel Christian tradition or by the community's need for mechanical and agricultural skills. These communally shared purposes were important; they clarified a teacher's duties and sanctioned his authority. To the extent that a student was a member of those communities—for example, the son of a Baptist or of a Brahmin or of a farmer—he also gave his implicit assent to his obligation to be taught and to the right of his teachers to teach. Yet the double sword of the knowledge explosion and social mobility is cutting up those communities forever.

To understand what has happened, one need only look at the current isolation of humanistic professions from one another and from the society at large. As a humanist, I have had no recognizable community to guide and sanction my teaching. The "company of

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learned men," into which one of my diplomas welcomes me, is not really a community that can speak for my students. A community, whatever else it does, provides a microcosm of purpose within which an individual's own purposes play a functional, organic part. A community is a group in which any member of the group can go to any other member and expect that his goals will be accepted as legitimate, that his needs will be considered a matter of mutual concern, and that his identity will be accurately perceived. That idea of community may live in some graduate departments and professional schools, where specific educational goals are shared by most people. Except in a handful of possible exceptions, however, it does not live in whole colleges. The things most faculty members expect from their students are manifestly different from what the students, their parents, and the larger society expect. Those differences are aggravated by all the devices and strategies that keep students and professors separate, even when they share a classroom for a semester.

It is possible, of course, for competent teachers to overcome these barriers. They do so in innumerable ways and in classes that often appear quite conventional. We each have our own style of wrestling. But even when individual teachers live up to these ideals, the cause of humanism can never be fully served until this idea of community finds a central place in our concept of the humanities themselves, until we have developed a non-elitist mode of community to keep the traditions alive. Our students' lives are not spent in our classrooms, nor for the most part do our books play a very durable role in their lives. If our best work as teachers is to be of any use, then as professional scholars we must be working concurrently to revise the concept of the humanities in order to provide contexts outside the classroom within which humanistic learning is appropriate. As teachers and scholars we should be skilled at enhancing the identity of those around us. When someone says, as a black student at San Francisco State College did recently, "We're not looking for a melting pot; we're looking for ourselves," we should be prepared to treat that as an invitation to our kind of conversation.

That skill requires a new methodology. As humanists, we may be good at teaching and even, like Montaigne, good at relating, but we tend to be poor at listening and responding. We do not often hear ourselves being questioned, much less contradicted, by our students and our society; when we do, we generally do not answer, unless with a shrug. Much of that methodology would be transmuted social

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and behavioral science. On the one hand, we need to find ways to monitor what is going on around us; on the other, we need to frame pertinent alternatives. The humanist's concern should be not simply objects and events of the past, but equally his society's perception of those objects and events. As a teacher and scholar, he should be building utopias, real and imaginary, that are specific responses to the world in which he lives. Consider the man who lives in a modern city and understands what Chaucer has to say on the subject of love. If he is not moved to challenge those aspects of his environment that prohibit love, he is not a humanist but a pedant, and he should not be surprised if his society considers him expendable.

It should be clear that some changes are due in our professions. For college faculties, we need a set of academic career patterns that allow the development of a humanities specialist: a man skilled not only in the judgment of human creations, but also in the Socratic art of shaping his information into a specific response to another person's situation. He would need a new kind of graduate training that might, for example, take cognizance of humanistic psychology. We will have to tolerate a system in which each man defines his own specialty with much greater freedom than is now the case, and it should be a system that rewards him for changing specialties as well as for getting better in one specialty. We need to make room on all our faculties for doers as well as thinkers, and we need to devise ways to assimilate them. Such a faculty would engage its students in judging their environment and acting in it and on it. The resulting curriculum would appear problem-oriented, but the problems would be set by the students themselves and continually revised and refined as a result of a real dialectic with teachers, with books, and with the world. The problems would certainly not all be "contemporary" in the usual sense of the word, but they would reflect the concerns of living men.

Of course, if no such reforms come about, all will not necessarily be lost. We will probably continue to be tolerated, though ignored, by an indulgent society. We will continue to appear at ceremonial occasions, and our books will have attractive jackets. Our numbers will be replenished every June, and our robes and mortar boards will always fit. And, of course, we will preserve and comment upon our artifacts with increasing skill for the benefit of future humanists.

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2. Pico della Mirandola, "Oration on the Dignity of Man," trans. Elizabeth Livermore Forbes, in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man,* ed. Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, John Herman Randall, Jr. (Chicago, 1948), pp. 252-53. For discussion of Pico's syncretism, see Kristeller's "Introduction" to the "Oration."

3. In an interesting discussion of the psychological effects of a rapidly changing environment, Kenneth H. Craik predicts that in the future: "The human organism, as a physical object, will emerge as one of the most durable objects in the surround. For an object having by that date a life expectancy of 80 or possibly 90 years and having the property of maintaining a reasonable degree of identity of shape and form will present a marked contrast to the ever-changing and rapidly changing non-human environment. In terms of durability, the human organism will become the background and the fleet-formed non-human environment the foreground, in contrast to the English village of a century ago, in which the cathedral, shops and houses were the stable background for the brief-spanned entities which inhabited them." Craik, "The Prospects for an Environmental Psychology," *IPAR Research Bulletin* (University of California, Institute of Personality Assessment and Research, 1966), p. 15.

4. For example: "I would rather understand myself well by self-study than by reading Cicero. In the experience that I have of myself I find enough to make me wise, if I were a good scholar. Anyone who recalls the violence of his past anger, and to what a pitch his excitement carried him, will see its ugliness better than in Aristotle, and will conceive a juster hatred for it." Michel de Montaigne, *Essays,* trans. J. M. Cohen (Baltimore, 1958), p. 354.

5. *Ibid.,* p. 237.

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8. Walt Whitman, *Prose Works, 1892,* ed. Floyd Stovall (New York, 1964), Vol. 2, p. 411.

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HERBERT BLAU

Relevance: The Shadow of a Magnitude

> *I got undressed and I looked at myself, and I began to cry. Hush, Luster said. Looking for them ain't going to do no good. They're gone.*
>
> Benjy, in *The Sound and the Fury*

In one of the chapels of Peterborough Cathedral, there is a panel which shows an ass playing a harp. One doesn't know whether to laugh or pray. Is it a supreme expression of faith in man, to waft him to Heaven as a dumb beast? Or was that twelfth-century craftsman anticipating Rabelais, who stripped man to his behind and gave him a comic beating for his pains? One may feel it both ways: adoration and a secret skepticism below the altar. It was the same in medieval drama. God was the hero, magniloquent and vast, but most of the energy came from the Devil. In the iconography of the alchemists there is an image related to the panel at Peterborough. It shows the Devil as a donkey circled by dancers, braying a tune out of a horn up his ass. It's not entirely clear that the joke is on him. Actually, there's no point in hedging our bets—all ambiguities registered, the comedy is obviously leaning the other way. In virtually the same circle where Death the antic sat, grinning over his court, irreverence is presiding over life.

It's the same in Rabelais, in whom there's the barest syllable's difference between the scatology and escatology. He was a physician and committed to healing. "Without health," he said, "life is not life, life is no longer livable." In his considered opinion, there was little health in Paris, which resembled an open drain, a cesspool, a running sore—pollution so rampant there was only one cure. He sent Gargantua to the top of Notre Dame and had him piss all over the city, drowning thousands. It was an act of moral edification and civic improvement, medicinal, a prodigy of nature. It was also educational, the basis of a reconstruction of learning in the Abbey

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of Thélème, a radical institution in the history of humanism. Instead of the cautionary "Nothing in excess," the heuristic "Do What Thou Wouldst" was inscribed over the portal. There's a long subterranean torment between that mandate and the nihilist's "All is permitted," but when Pantagruel is born he breaks the cradle to signify there's no turning back. Or rather, in that revolution there is a turning back—an audaciously selective attitude about the past. The Hippocratic Oath is leveled against the hypocrites, and the Delphic "Know thyself"—the other inscription on the ancient portal—becomes "Physician, heal thyself." Personal hygiene is public therapy. The beginning of healing is in exposing the hidden. Is it true or is it not true that the unexamined life is not worth living? Socrates thought so, and the scholars at the Abbey of Thélème are told, "Let nothing be unknown to you."

If there is anything novel in the gesture of Pantagruel, it is a lust for totally expanded consciousness and the demand for suffrage at the instant of birth that we are still trying to redeem. In the calls for Black Power and Flower Power and Student Power, there is a similar irreverence and a comparable rage, coming out of the feeling that a birthright has been violated and a significant part of our human legacy lost. In the act of salvage, there is an impatience with half-measures. When the students, demanding relevance, are charged with being heedless of the past, the case is being misrepresented. What they are doing is choosing from the parallel and countervailing traditions in the available lore. The doctrine of Black Power is not solely a matter of civil rights but of claims upon the psyche from the vasty deep. There is no politics of joy that doesn't somehow respond to those claims. The rest is mere legislation, curriculum shift, and tedious lying. We needn't overestimate the percentage of students agitating to admit the potency of their quest for power. The quieter criticism of the moderates is affected by it. And only the grossest moral inattention would be consoled by the careerism and daily acquiescence of a majority. What's at stake is hardly a game of numbers. Seizing on traditions that have been denied has released both energy and moral fervor, and shaped the logistics of protest as well. High on the ledge of the library at Columbia was the shadow of Gargantua, and it was the spirit of Pantagruel which advanced at Chicago the disruptive candidacy of the obscene Pig.

No matter what the media make of it, we get the message. As they chanted over television, the whole world was watching—

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and neither backlash, tear gas, decrepit electoral process, nor the return of Richard Nixon on a platform of Law and Order could reverse the inevitable "return of the repressed." Both presidential candidates of the major parties were already undermined by a rhetoric they couldn't master as they constantly assured us they were socking it to us and telling it like it is. What is happening to our institutions is providential and irresistible. It is part of a *novus ordo saeclorum* which is no mere fantasy of the radical left but the existential recurrence of a venerable dream. Fantasies, like politicians, find their time, or make a comeback. In the humanities, it is already second nature to defend—with the most formidable cerebration and passion for form—the demands of the instinctual life, subjectivism, love's body, *homo ludens*, and the primacy of personal vision, down to the most perverse mutation of our most singular monsters. With nearly incredible technique we scanned the uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor. ("Behaviour, what wert thou/Till this madman showed thee?") All through the twentieth century we've been studying the comic mortification or outright retribution of repressed Energy seeking its Other. There we were gaping with our marvellous craft, when the rebellions came along to say look how little of such vision you're getting into your programs.

Surely our disciplines have only a sad drained remote affinity to that joyous exercise of spirit in pursuit of knowledge that Rabelais proclaimed at the Abbey of Thélème. With immaculate methodology we've sucked "the substantific marrow" and ended up, self-deluded masters of our areas of "responsible knowledge," gnawing on an old bone. What the student rebellions turned up was news to the students, but it was hardly news to us. We all knew the ways in which the humanities had broken faith. The forms we teach have hit upon a void. If our teaching has any contemporary substance, we have pronounced our own judgment. The books we taught are used against us—Plato, Sartre, Buber, Blake. The demand of the students is not for dilution of knowledge or the abandonment of discipline, but that we be there, *present* in our knowledge—and not some bifurcated portion of what we are, but the whole man whose body is the book, else a great Prince in prison lies. The great rediscoveries of this period—in civil rights, action projects, encounter psychology, and the war resistance—have to do with what Polanyi calls personal knowledge. If criticism has emerged as a surrogate for moral philosophy, the drive is to reduce the

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distance between philosophy and action.

I remember teaching Kafka's *The Trial* on a day when some tractors appeared on campus to knock down some trees in order to put up some huts. We were talking about the ambiguities of power. There's nothing ambiguous about it, one of my students said. There's that tractor, here's my body, there's that tree. Too simple? Perhaps. We've seen enough of it, however, to know there's a moral to be drawn. The moral is *authenticity.* All the anxieties of humanistic scholars about the idea of relevance have to do with the failure to face up to this issue. In defense, we accuse the students of simplifying or wanting a sense of history; but that charge is stupefyingly evasive. We answer the call for relevance with proliferating pseudo-knowledge as the monographs stockpile like Overkill, and we stiffen above the burden of stack-dust like the Duc of Guermantes above his years in *À la recherche,* as if perched grotesquely on giant stilts taller than church spires.

If the students are delinquent about the prose of history, their consciousness of its bloody poetry is impacted beyond tolerance. Where they stress what happened, they don't want it to happen again. When the student protest is countered by saying we've seen it before, we are telling a truth and missing its meaning. The analogies fail under the duress of history. If similar motives were operating, say, in 1848, the solution then seemed to be the acquisition of historical consciousness and the facts of history that went with it. Today humanistic scholars must ask why, pondering civilization and its discontents, protest among the students takes the form of historical consciousness that is impatient with the facts or an obsession with the facts that have simply been left out of history, as with the blacks. I take it that the escalation of protest into anarchy is both inevitable and provisional. There is something Tolstoyan in the tactics: "Why talk in subtleties," Tolstoy wrote when criticized for abandoning the complexity of art for the bluntness of polemic, "when there are so many flagrant truths to be told." This is not to say the students aren't contributing their share to the credibility gap exposed. In the revolutionary process they have learned to lie, blackmail, and brutalize themselves in the provocation of the brutality they wanted to prove. No matter that they proved it. The veil falls, the beast is exposed, and one sees his double. It happens even to people under thirty. The wrench thrown into the machine to curb an insane momentum has released a brainless violence no better than brainless authority.

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If it's not yet equivalent to the subtler violence of our educational system, with its illicit connections to the technostructure and its distant reflection in Vietnam, there's no reward in waiting for an escalation of inhumanities to make a balance. I can't pretend to measure the point of no return, but the students who have been resisting force-feeding by the system must eventually see there is only so much of a lesson the university can learn by force. When the university retaliates, nobody is learning anything. The university's survival depends on refusal of the means of violence even to protect itself against outrage. The students' cause depends on recognition of the difference between confrontation politics and a confrontation.

All outrage admitted, what the students have done beyond reproach is to make us question the wholeness and accuracy of our teaching and to measure our precious values not dispassionately against one another but in real-life situations, urgently, against ourselves. They are also reminding us of what gets lost in the rationalistic jostling of values in our most resourceful habits of thought—that the deepest agreements with life are made below the structures by which we are bound. The true social contract is written in invisible ink. It represents a consensus of the inviolable. I am speaking of what is sovereign in ourselves which is the basis of any polity, and of which we are forever trying to understand the terms. The archives are full of preliminary drafts of which the humanities are the guardian, our Central Intelligence Agency. When impotency looks imminent, we are theoretically prepared. The task of the humanities, all fine print read, is to support the resistance and protect our private property—by summoning up the imagination of power. It would be pitiful if the humanities, foolishly arguing the validity of relevance, couldn't hear the message or read the handwriting on the wall, for it's all been lifted from some of our sacred texts.

The trouble is, as the graffiti said during the May rebellion in Paris, "ears have walls." That wasn't all the graffiti said. For Herbert Marcuse, what was written on the walls in Paris defined the nature of the insurrection. He saw in the graffiti the coming together of Karl Marx and André Breton (there was also the coming together of students and workers, which General De Gaulle has neatly contained and to which we have no real parallel in America, the blacks notwithstanding). "Imagination in power: that is truly revolutionary. It is new and revolutionary to translate into reality

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the most advanced ideas and values of the imagination." One thinks of Shelley, proclaiming the poet the unacknowledged legislator of mankind, handing out pamphlets on the streetcorners of Dublin. It was a lonely operation in the white radiance of eternity. Over the millennium settled the factory dust. For both Marx and the Surrealists—and now the students—history is the nightmare from which we are trying to awaken, like Gargantua from "Gothic night." Since the atomic dust, history has entered the biological cycle. For students weaned between fallout and dropout, going into the Underground or the New Politics, the marriage of the Dialectic and the Unconscious is a consummation as devoutly to be wished as the marriage of Heaven and Hell. The marriage has been expected since that time in the old town of Zurich when Lenin moved into the house at No. 6 Spiegelgasse directly across from the Cabaret Voltaire at No. 1, where Dada was issuing its manifestos. Samuel Beckett, to whom activism is irrelevant and social solutions insane, nevertheless gave us a description of the oscillating ideology which brought the Pig to Chicago and the son of Ubu Roi, screaming *merdre!*, onto the barricades at the Sorbonne. "But he had hardly felt the absurdity of those things, on the one hand, and the necessity of those others, on the other (for it is rare that the feeling of absurdity is not followed by the feeling of necessity), when he felt the absurdity of those things of which he had just felt the necessity (for it is rare that the feeling of necessity is not followed by the feeling of absurdity)."

When, to avoid vertigo, the Theater of the Absurd moves out to the streets, we have one of the dizzier and more demoralizing aspects of the student rebellions. But the motives can hardly be discounted, and they are by no means academically disreputable. The students have learned their lessons intolerably well. The reign of the critical intelligence during the stasis of the Cold War is reaping poetic justice. The logic of an art-form has reached its bitter end. There is a creative disequilibrium in the polymorphous perversity. We speak of infantile or adolescent behavior, but that's partially a response to the unnerving threat of child-like questions: We hold these truths to be self-evident—why? We hold these truths to be self-evident—why not? Are the students alienated? No, it's not really the students who are alienated, since they are the atomized reflectors of profound cultural disorder, performing for us now like the mechanisms of dream, telling us more perhaps than we want to know. They inherit our contradictions with our

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guilt, and they are acting them out objectively for us to see. It's as if the young were doing therapy for us. The psychodrama reveals that we are the alienated, since we are the ones who insist, with injury to ourselves, on a critical distance between what we profess and what we do.

The process of revelation is painful, and it has opened up real issues of matter and methodology in education. Making learning relevant has little to do with mere topicality or immediacy or politicization or the updating of accepted knowledge or denial of the past or the abrogation of discipline; rather our disciplines are being pressed back to first principles and reinvested with a passion for the elemental. Like the gas man playing the Bishop in Genet's *The Balcony,* those of us who teach are being asked whether we dare go to the limit of our self-conceptions. Choose a role and there are frightening implications—in text, subtext, and shadow text too, what is mirrored in the mirror behind the words; or to put it in the classroom, what remains in the mind's eye when the blackboard's erased.

The issues are explored in the contest of alter egos in Peter Weiss' play on Marat and the Marquis de Sade. In the entertainment designed for the madhouse, in which the madmen play historical parts, the man of detachment is poised against the violent revolutionary whom he has created for the occasion. As he examines his own incapacity for action, Sade resembles the humanist brought to the highest equivocating pitch of analytical introspection. The problem of identity is given priority over the need for action. But self-definition follows a truthless path to a limitless and metamorphic bottom. All we can do as we descend is try to dig the criminal out of ourselves. That criminal is the shadow of a criminal society, in which "What we do is just a shadow of what we want to do. . . ." The reflections of Sade, who distrusts revolutionary extremism, are attacked with scorn by Marat, who has had enough of the politics of despair:

> If I am extreme I am not extreme in the same
> way as you
> Against Nature's silence I use action
> In the vast indifference I invent a meaning
> I don't watch unmoved I intervene
> and say that this and this are wrong
> and I work to alter and improve them.

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At the bottom of their respective obsessions, the activist Marat and the uncommitted Sade are allies, similarly demonic. Either one might have said this:

> The important thing
> is to pull yourself up by your own hair
> to turn yourself inside out
> and see the whole world with fresh eyes.

And as the chorus chants, "We want our rights and we don't care how/ We want our revolution NOW," the decisive voice is that of the former priest and radical socialist Jacques Roux, straightjacketed by the Establishment, who says of the conflict between Marat and Sade to the audience which is impassively watching: "When will you learn to see/ When will you learn to take sides" . . . Of course we must remember, in this whirligig of identities in a no-man's land first explored by Pirandello, that Roux is an actor playing a madman playing a defrocked priest. The cast applauds with catatonic derision at the end of the play, as the audience backs nervously into the streets. Fortunately the distractions of the boulevard are available to relieve the hazards of pulling oneself up by one's own hair.

But that's not entirely true in a university. Our commitment to truth confounds us there. Who was it that was dragged screaming into the twentieth century? It's not the reform of our institutions that disturbs us so much, it goes deeper than that. As in Genet's play, we are being forced back, naked, into that clearing where all values are in jeopardy and we're no longer sure we have anything to put in their place. "We discover that we do not know our own role," as Rilke observed in *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge;* "we look for a mirror; we want to remove our makeup and take off what is false and be real. But somewhere a piece of disguise that we forgot still sticks to us. A trace of exaggeration remains in our eyebrows, we do not notice the corners of our mouth are bent. And so we walk around a mockery and a mere half: neither having achieved being nor actors." Nietzsche anticipated this condition in *The Genealogy of Morals* and put the question we are forced with all scholarly scruple to put to ourselves: "We knowers are unknown to ourselves, and for good reason: how can we ever hope to find what we have never looked for? We are perpetually on our way thither, being by nature winged insects and honey gatherers of the mind. The only thing that lies

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close to the mind is the desire to bring something home to the hive. As for the rest of life—so-called 'experience'—who among us is serious enough for that?" He speaks of seriousness, but his end is lightheartedness, a "gay science" which "is the reward of a long, courageous, painstaking, inward seriousness, which to be sure is not within every man's compass." Looking back over the wild and dangerous territory of his mind, where all value is shattered by the intensity of exposure, Nietzsche adds, "On the day when we can honestly exclaim, 'let's get on with the comedy!' . . . we shall have given a new turn to the Dionysiac drama of man's destiny. . . ."

In the presence of Dionysus we are quick to invoke Apollo. But the comedy won't be satisfied until the laugh laughing at the laugh deflates pretension and drives men and institutions back to their source, to the "radical innocence" which Yeats sought or the ecstasy of the elemental which Harte Crane was desperate for in *The Bridge* when he cried out, "dance us back the tribal morn!" Lévi-Strauss, whose investigations of the mind of the savage inform us about the savagery of mind, developed a vast cerebral system after eating the pullulating sap of the white *kouro* worm. We have lain in the soil, T. S. Eliot told us some time ago, and criticized the worm. When the worm turned, all the old dualisms were up for grabs. We are expert in the ambiguities. Confronting the inseparability of reality and illusion, action and passion, identity and character, sin and sensibility, being and becoming, art and life, we have warned ourselves about no irritable reaching after fact or reason. Now all the barriers are down, and the scenarios being acted out by the young contain imperatives prepared for in our research.

What is it that really disturbs us in the new generation, if it is not a shift into the abyss as normative, the aim being an extension of sensory capacity by immersion in the undifferentiated? They are committed to the art of flux. What we once studied in Rimbaud and Mallarmé as a calculated derangement of the senses has become an habitual way of life. In a strange consortium of powers, technology has come to the aid of art. They think cinematically, feel spatially, perceive by montage. Synesthesia is second nature. They live in a mystique of depth involvement. At the end of ideology was tribalism, the new communes, participatory democracy. Teleology is replaced by simultaneity, time is scanned topographically, narrative structure gives way to cyclical structure, since it's always the same story being told without end. "Sucked within

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the Maelstrom, man must go round." Coherence is a continuum of succeeding vacancies into which rushes at every instant the outside possibility of a causeless being, revised, travestied, and birthed by recapitulations of a future hopelessly out of reach.

According to Marx, the revolutions of 1848 were the beginning of the end of the disguises of history. More than a century later, we still find ourselves acting out a costume drama. The difference now is that the students, revising Marx, have accepted the inevitability of the costumes. Metamorphosis is at the heart of things; behavior is masked. Revolution is a performance. What distresses us is that they accept in dead earnest what our greatest literature implies: Life is a dream, an insubstantial pageant. Our affairs are being conducted on the great wobbling pivot of permanent change. If there is coherence in our passing, there is no final proof—only sensation and guesswork. The ego, as Hesse explores it in *Steppenwolf,* is a manifold entity whose nature is lost in the optical illusion of a single undeniable body. Only the fictions are inexhaustible. The experimentalism of the students in the playing out of roles is an effort to recover the lost repertoire. *L'acte gratuit,* the existential moment, making the scene, the thing itself—they are all trial balloons, improvisations.

It may seem at times like radical nonsense, but who can deny that they have redeemed in the process old theoretic modes of behavior—including concrete purpose, commitment, sacrifice, martyrdom, and heroism. Like Yeats, who thought Cuchulain till Cuchulain stood where he stood, they have converted fantasy into possibilities of action. In accepting the fundamental theatricality of being, they have told those of us protecting our disciplines something about the renewal of discipline. As Yeats put it, "There is a relation between discipline and the theatrical sense. If we cannot imagine ourselves as different from what we are and assume that second self, we cannot impose a discipline upon ourselves. . . . Active virtue as distinguished from a passive acceptance of a current code is, therefore, consciously dramatic, the wearing of a mask." In the French Revolution, bourgeois businessmen wore the mask of Romans; in the American Revolution, Boston patriots were disguised as Indians; and today rebels wear motley borrowed from the rag and boneshop of the heart.

"We are all under the influence of a collective historical unconsciousness," says one of the student leaders. "We want a communal world where the imagination runs supreme, and where human

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institutions respond to human needs." If there is a mockery of history in the disguises taken from the *anima mundi,* there is also the historical courage to choose not only a second self, but to play out selfhood in its metamorphoses. "We are Instant Theater," proclaims another militant, "we create our own roles. The humanities are dead in our institutions, alive in ourselves alone." If Instant Theater looks through its more sweeping existentialism like another manifestation of the Instant Culture it is trying to subvert, we are only fooling ourselves when we dismiss too lightly the substance in the presumption. Bad faith is not only limited to politics, but ingrained in every aspect of the systems and techniques by which men live. "Lie, copulate and die," wrote Céline in *Journey to the End of the Night.* The line is a litany in modern literature. "One wasn't allowed to do anything else. People lied fiercely and beyond belief, ridiculously, beyond the limits of absurdity. . . . Everything you touched was faked in some way—the sugar, the aeroplanes, shoe leather, jam, photographs; everything you read, swallowed, sucked, admired, proclaimed, refuted or upheld—it was all an evil myth and masquerade." Certainly the condition has been compounded by technology, which proliferates the resources of mystification: food substitutes, organ transplants, new techniques of replication, and, by the year 2000 if the technocrats are right, gene modification and programmed dreams. While energy from the nerves may be used to actuate exoskeleton power devices, the nervous system may be virtually imitated by miniaturized electronic components. Every breakthrough in science and social engineering contributes to the intensity of the masquerade. Every channel of information contributes to the plethora of pseudo-image and illusion, escalating distrust into a sense of conspiracy. The killing of Lee Harvey Oswald occurred on television like a demented fantasy.

According to the ancient drama, Destiny moves in mysterious ways. In the vitiated pageantry of things, we add irreality to inscrutability. The mystifications to be removed are far beyond the imaginings of Marx. If we accept the notion that all the world is a stage, we are in danger of adding theater to theater till nothing but illusion reigns. Here we are, perhaps, at the self-defeating end of the active virtue of the students; or at a conceptual impasse where we can see, from another point of view, what we have released in their behavior. In the theater's terms, too much theater is melodrama. Like farce, melodrama is an agency of the Absurd. It is also the expression of a persecution complex, with all the

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distortions of childhood fantasy and neurotic dream. The power of melodrama is its instinct for the primitive and the uninhibited. It is an exposure of the repressed life; it gives us the power to play out what we didn't dare. As the bland world of affluence is rejected, it caters to a desire for risk and adventure. On the other side, melodrama is also the realm of the grotesque, the dreadful, and the unassimilable. We have only come to respect it again since World War II, with its mutilations and desecrations, the Buchenwald lampshades and radioactively peeling skin, indiscriminate slaughter on a gigantic scale. As we can see in the plays of Sartre, melodrama is the realism of atrocity. Just as any horror is imaginable, so is any sequence of impossibility—as in the novels of Burroughs, form following function like a razor blade. Perversion, magnification, barbarity are the conventions of the melodramatist who, in our own day as in Jacobean drama, may insist he is merely ordering it as it is.

Yet who can really argue that it is telling the whole story? In our ardor for the elemental, we have renewed, and necessarily, absurdly, the truths of childhood, neurosis, and savagery—opposing the apprehensions of myth and magic to the misapprehensions of rationalism. But the melodramatic point of view is, seen from anywhere but inside itself, ultimately paranoid. Inside melodrama, reality is villainous and unnegotiable, and the only way to transcend it is to make one's own being the indisputable center of all integrity. The melodramatic hero is Faust without Mephistopheles, undeterred will without limit, Gargantua disguised as the hunchback of Notre Dame.

To describe the melodramatic vision is not to dispel it. So with the behavior of the students, when demands are escalated into the intense inane. The generation which grew up affluently with a sense of powerlessness is now, quite powerfully, in the center of the stage. Ruthlessly sure they will overcome, they are still insisting that nobody is listening. The fact is, certainly since Chicago, everybody is listening—though that fact alone may not alter social process or the mechanisms set in motion long before our military-industrial complex. It may even be that we are dealing with forces that are by now irreversible, and hence really unnegotiable. Given the forces that none of us understand, the human mystery, protest can only be posture. It is at this point in the theater that we return to the tragic vision.

Still, we have lived through a period, the decade after World

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War II, when a facile sense of tragedy was a pretext for silence and evasion. In tragic drama, the emotional life and history of the individual are organized to earn his fate. It may be similarly so in life, but we don't always believe it. It's good that we don't believe it. If life is tragic, there's no reason to live *as if* it were tragic—that's also adding theater to theater. The result is a fake pathos. The activism of the sixties grew out of impatience with that pathos—a kind of sentimental melodrama. It began by finding power in a negative capability, by a refusal to relinquish the power it had almost no reason to believe it had. A man, we came to feel again, is not merely an endurance in time but a judgment upon himself. The judgment is implicit in the sum of his acts. At the borders of this judgment, it turned out with increasing frequency that the Law's coherence was not our coherence. To the degree the Law assumed the role of Destiny, there was defiance of the Law. Whatever the constraints of Destiny, we came to behave *as if* we were in control. If that is a grand illusion, it is perhaps our most precious illusion. This brings us back to those demands which have clear and present substance.

If the desire for change is sometimes magnified out of all possibility by the militants, the resistance to change remains a scandal despite all sympathy by embarrassed humanists. I mean the most liberal not the unregenerate. Some of us are severely chastened by student dissent, but we are beguiled by privilege, dissuaded by grants, deflected by Fulbrights, trapped by departments, and—even when conscience is next to overwhelming—returned to sin by scholarly detachment, the academic version of doing your own thing. So the confrontation takes place, with the administrators holding the bag and the trustees retaining the power. Inevitably, the petitions follow after, but that's only the reflex of a static character, returned by habit to a convention. The result is a comedy at our expense. This is invariably the case when scholars in the humanities are defending their disciplines as if they were eternal verities, when in fact a discipline is sustained only by the moving continuity of its dissolutions. Instead of invoking "standards" to preserve what is clearly going under, we might pay attention to what has been recorded all over our literature—that standards are discovered precisely in jeopardy, as a series of abolitions; as William Carlos Williams says in *Paterson*, "knowledge, undispersed, its own undoing."

It is astonishing how much uncatalogued precedent still oper-

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ates in our procedures, though philosophically we know better. Even what we take to be research at the frontiers of knowledge is still constrained by needless usages from the past. We see that in every discipline that insists on using the word as if there were really defined limits of inquiry rather than a structure of hypotheses about such limits. In the humanities, whose province has customarily included manners and morals and the methodologies of emotion, it may be fair to say that the most genuine research is being done by experimenters outside the system—by activists, mystics, field workers, dope fiends, renegade priests, hippies, occultists, body fetishists, deviants, mutants, and conscientious objectors. All these types have shown that the older uniform society of stable forms was severely limited in its repertoire of behavior and life-style choices. As we move inward through invisible space or outward to the galaxies, our values are being challenged by a vaster complex of available roles. Teachers doing analyses of novels which illustrate the destructive element or the demonic shedding of multiple personality or journeys to the heart of darkness or the perverse infractions of the Magic Theater are now facing students some of whom are conscientious practitioners of our most exciting metaphors and formal strategies. Speak of the Double or the Secret Sharer, and he sits there, coolly, wondering whether you have the courage to acknowledge him before your eyes.

Between student and teacher the terms of confrontation are different today not only because students are gratuitously protesting, but because they are assuming some of these disturbing roles; also because the range of their experience has expanded remarkably in a generation. Certain old pedagogical leverages are gone. Only a decade ago, when I had gone abroad for the first time, I could get a lot of mileage in class by talking of my world travels, confident that the students had never been where I'd been. That automatically boosted the authority I already had. I literally knew more about the world than the student did. That's no longer certain, we know—and the whole issue of experience has been turned upside down. We talk of the great abstractions—Law, Justice, Freedom—but the kids to whom we once despaired of teaching civics in high school have not only been down to the courthouse, but have also been inside the jail. They know political process as we never did. Literally, increasingly, they have more *experience*. Every day now I encounter students who have seen more of the world than I have seen. Some of them have hitched

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across the country in the wake of Ginsberg and Kerouac, and others have made their way up and down the coasts of Africa. They have wept beside the Ganges and spent the winter in Khatmandu. "You don't know what it's like in the South," I used to say, having done basic training in Georgia. But we are now talking to students who have knocked on the doors beside the watermelon patches where I trained, and who have scraped the Delta to bring blacks to the polls. Compared to those of us who have garnered our most recent experience from our bibliographies, they simply *know* more.

Our only recourse is to claim wisdom through benefit of years. But which of us, as we study our world, can really presume? We have one sole advantage: All things considered, we are closer to dying, and hence should have thought more seriously about that. But even about dying the young are more inquisitive. There was subliminal fallout in their fingerpainting. When they left Dick and Jane, they went to *The Myth of Sisyphus,* and some have pondered deeply Camus' assertion that the major philosophical question of our time is, why not suicide? They may have thought about it prematurely, but prematurity seems to be the conclusive form of consciousness in a world with its finger on the button. As that modern young woman Antigone says—she who belongs to Death—"There is no guilt in reverence of the dead." The most persuasive thinkers since Descartes have told them that they die into the world, and every authentic rite of passage requires a death. The pain of the future is precisely this requirement of becoming. Their existence is predicated on a void echoing with all the successions of the vanished. It is not only fashion, experiment, and the desire for instant mind-expansion that accounts for the interest in drugs, but also the desire to live sentiently among the successions as if they were simultaneous, not denying but recovering all time.

We are all familiar with the abyss and theories of continuous becoming—at least we are *conceptually* familiar. By such concepts, however, the young have been touched to the quick. Many to whom we have transmitted this legacy of the void have discovered there, in the spectral continuity of absence, the imprints of all previous existence, a memory bank, as if there alone is the reliable living record that survives all credibility gaps. Out of attrition comes creation. It is a creation incessantly recommitted to the test of nothingness. Making and unmaking. At the center of the process

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is the act choosing the act to come. Philosophy is a dramaturgy of perpetually renewing crisis, or stasis. (Wittgenstein: "The best that I could write would never be more than philosophical remarks: my thoughts were soon crippled if I tried to force them on in any single direction against their natural inclination.") If Authority toppled into the abyss, taking duration with it, a new sort of endurance was born, radical, surreal, post-Oedipal. As Rimbaud defined it, "I am my mother and my child/ At each point in the eternal." Pantagruel broke the cradle and now, with the absurd reparation of a dream, we find it endlessly rocking.

If we expect to teach the young, we must study their art, like it or not. Whatever the medium, the stress is ephemerality. The psychedelic posters are the window shades of junk culture. Death being the mother of beauty, they celebrate the Grateful Dead. Like the hippies' flowers, the posters are meant to wither, though now that they're mass-produced, replication makes up for perpetuation. There is eternity in the duplicating machine, as in the *Om* made possible by electronic sound. One can think of this negatively as evidence that the young have no staying power and their art-forms no durability. But that's not really the gist of it: The rhythm is tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow, to the last syllable etc. *Om*. Magnitude is measured by the willingness to throw away. It takes endurance. There is theory behind it, moreover, and tradition. About the time the Fillmore Auditorium was getting started and the Berkeley rebellion was breaking out, there was an exhibition of Jugendstil and Expressionism in German posters at the University Art Gallery. Once again the lesson was learned. The first psychedelic designers were influenced by this exhibit, and one of them had been a student of Albers at Yale. Thus, despite the crudity of the photolithography, there is real sophistication in the color complementaries which contribute to the deliberate interchangeability of figure and ground, and the reversibility of image. True, it's hard to read, which is precisely the strategy you might expect from a disenchanted subculture dramatizing itself a Mystery. The typography is a secret code for the initiates, as in the engravings of Blake, who also knew about acid—and the corrosion of value into value.

There are implications for a curriculum in all this, but it's not a curriculum that needs working out. In fact, the moment these impulses are absorbed into curricular thinking we have a continuance of the academy in the old vein. Let's have a class on it, we

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say, or a panel discussion; or, since militancy has no lien on wisdom either, let's have a Black Studies program. Teaching the Beatles is not necessarily being relevant. At the deepest level that's not what the students are asking for. That's not what we were asking for in our preliminary search through the ambiguities that sprung loose the power of blackness and the energies of the abyss. What we're all asking for is to reduce the distance between our classes and life, even if it means abandoning our classes. That will require a more radical reformation of our schools than we can reasonably expect. But we must speculate beyond reason if only because, like after-images in the eye, there comes into the mind what the mind puts off at first encounter, that which is so relevant it can only be seen out of phase.

Antigone was relevant when she confronted Creon. That's still a confrontation to be argued. In our humanities classes we have been conscientious about the *argument,* but we have done very little about Antigone's claims. It may be true, given the enigmatic gods, that nothing can be done, but the students won't concede that—and they will especially have none of that shift in the balance of power which Dürrenmatt alluded to when he said that in the modern world Creon's secretary closes Antigone's case. Actually, it's a case that refuses to be closed. With Creon withdrawn into the obfuscations of power, there are myriads of secretaries around to worry about the curriculum. Like Antigone, however, the students remind us that our profoundest humanistic duty is to "The immortal unrecorded laws" which are "operative for ever, beyond man utterly." When Antigone commits civil disobedience, she is not presuming beyond herself. What she realizes is that she is "only mortal" and that with evil all about her, compelled to act, she can hardly "Think Death less than a friend."

Which is not to say she is indifferent about dying. She loves life and abandons it with fear. We know her fate is unalterable, but as we speculate on its meaning we must come back to this question: Is there no way of altering the system so the next Antigone won't be put to the test? Since the mechanisms of the State provide for themselves, how can we provide for Antigone? To say that only tragedy can provide is somehow to avoid the case.

We speak of radical alteration of the educational structure, but do we mean it? How much are we, individually, willing to give up? At the end of all our research and analysis, are we ready to act on what we find? How much are we really willing

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to experiment? Is our literature forever to remain in our literature? When, after a formal analysis of *The Trial*, we come finally to the parable of the door, what do we make of it? Perceiving the radiance in the darkness, do we stand baffled before the Law, teased out of action by our gifts of equivocal thought. ("The commentators note in this connection: 'The right perception of any matter and a misunderstanding of the same matter do not wholly exclude each other.' ") Or in some reflex of residual power, do we summon up the courage to walk through? I remember entangling my students in the most appalling paradox of all: Protest as you will, I said, Kafka is unconvinced. As I read it, *you* are the power structure. They were enraged, they refused, they wouldn't see it that way. Academically speaking, they were wrong. Chances are, as it seemed with Joseph K., we may be the victims of a metaphysical hoax and returned, through any door, to the same old structure. But how do we really know until we dare? K., remember, died like a dog—"it was as if the shame of it must outlive him." Whose shame? We hardly need Marcuse to tell us that this society's very rationality is irrational and destructive of the free development of human faculties, whatever security it has achieved based on war and a garrison state.

All around us now, however, there are people daring to set up patterns of radical change—in community experiences, political involvement, and life-style. Who can really contend that what is happening in our classrooms has more human significance than all this? The future of the humanities is, at least temporarily, not in our books or our artifacts but in these experiments, which are expanding the repertoire of learning and providing a subtler dialogue between the individual and authority, between person and person. They have brought ideas out of Plato's cave into the realm of action and into the body itself—which is the long-neglected victim of our academic enterprise. Think of all the spiritual disciplines we have talked about, all the sacred texts we have studied, whose proper reading required physical preparation—just as Gargantua had to be prepared physically to be a Renaissance gentleman. We regale in our classrooms about the debilities of spectator sports, but nothing in our conception of the humanities makes development of the body an organic condition of development of the mind, nor have we paid much attention to the language of the body as it exists in such disciplines as mime, dance, yoga, or the art of archery in Zen. And music, whose true fundamental

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is blood rhythm but which was once part of the medieval curriculum, how is it we have made of it such a specialization that most of our Ph.D.'s are not only musically illiterate, but have no music in their souls? Surely one of the great contributions of the young is to have brought music back into everyday life, and a kind of primitive poetry as well.

Like the rock groups, the experiments I am talking about we are all well aware of. I am speaking of underground worship, with new liturgies and modes of communion; of new communities, like Synanon and Daytop, in which the assumption is that the best therapist is the physician who has healed himself; of ventures in communal design, and even architecture, which involve bringing information and thought off the page and onto the walls; of intellectual task-forces and teach-ins; of game techniques, encounters, happenings, T-groups, be-ins, freak-outs, which aim to release lost capacities for play and improvisation; of multi-media scenes like the Fillmore or the Electric Circus; of Operation Bootstrap and sensitivity training—all of which have possibilities for learning environments, as do film, videotape, and the visual and plastic arts if really approached as alternative languages of *inquiry*, as well as alternatives to the term paper. Some of the techniques are already being absorbed—mostly in schools of education or in psychology courses. All of them have been described and exploited in the media and their findings confiscated and adulterated by Madison Avenue, just as the posters which once advertised the Haight-Ashbury are now part of the iconography of the frightened suburbs. Still, none of these developments are discredited by availability or popularity, nor by books on *Education and Ecstasy*. It may, however, be a measure of what's wrong with the humanities that I hesitate to recommend them in a learned journal as a guide to what needs to be done, for there is some lingering tic about academic respectability.

Some of what occurs in all this stuff is boring, naïve, and downright silly, but that may be part of its virtue—an immunity to conventional standards of progress, competence, and achievement. It has professional limits, to be sure, but it has released a healthy amateurism. Each of these efforts performs at a more tactile level of awareness than our curricula, exercising the senses—particularly touch, the most unused of all; particularly in the relation of one person to another; particularly directed to the renewal of community. Time enough to declare the limitations and dangers of

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these processes, the dependence of some of them on pure feeling, the strategic abandonment of the rational, or the emergence of an isonomy, which is a political condition of no-rule. They are vulnerable to hysteria and demagoguery, but Aristotle says that was true of so excellent an art as rhetoric, depending on the intelligence and morality of the user. None of these things is seen, however, in true perspective if not linked to the effort to restore to men what is minimally required for manhood—for the materially disadvantaged, an economic base; for the psychically mortgaged, a lifeline to the repressed. It is no accident that all these developments have occurred simultaneously with the renewal of political and social passion through the disabilities of the Cold War. They are all contributing to the struggle to link inwardness to otherness. They involve relinquishment of the ego and intellectual pride to a common humanity, opening channels to the dispossessed. While they may accommodate too easily those who remain paralyzed and distressed, they also attract those resourceful young people whose remarkable talents for social engineering have shown up in the ghettos, in Appalachia, the Peace Corps, and the campaign of Senator McCarthy, as well as in the guerrilla tactics of SDS. There may be an ullulating mindlessness on the dance floors of some of our stroboscopic emporia, but there are also clues to what moves our students not only when they've blown their minds but when we want to reach their minds, and to new processes of learning that have been long implied in our critical theory. The appeals are directly to the aural and visual imagination, in the grammar of the body, synesthetically, spatially, in a stream of consciousness, as if the critical theory, exploded in the drama of mind, were suddenly released on a stage, "autokinatonetically" as *Finnegans Wake*, "anastomosically assimilated and preteridentified paraidiotically, in fact, the sameold gamebold adomic structure . . . as highly charged with electrons as hophazards can effective it. . . ."

If we carry this adomic structure over to education, we come, "by a commodius vicus of recirculation," back to the organic environmental learning ideas of Dewey and Rousseau, who have been so long abused for misrepresented theory. As Lévi-Strauss points out, Rousseau, who came nearest of all the *philosophes* to being an anthropologist, never exalted the Natural Man, nor did he confuse the state of Nature with the State of Society. What he did was to give us a theoretical model of a society which, corresponding to nothing that we actually know and probably

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nothing that will ever exist, may nevertheless help us disentangle ourselves from the inertia of a system divided against itself because we are divided against ourselves, like Godard's Pierrot, who sees through his eyes and hears through his ears, and feels no unity. Fractured knowledge is unnatural. What was an expedience in methodology became the disease of specialization. We have all been victims of categories, linear sequence, and abstract duration. Certain kinds of investigation require these habits of mind, and no secondhand McLuhanism will abolish them. They are human, but at some limit they are violations of our humanness, and we have sufficient evidence that we've reached that limit. The record is in—from saturation bombing to pollution of the landscape, from political estrangement to psychological disorder, from public indifference to anonymous killing. Jacques Cousteau recently warned that the ocean may be contaminated before we can develop the means to benefit from its natural resources. All of this is a reflection of demographic imbalance in our own nature. We lack identification with the physical universe of a myth-minded age, and we lack identification with the suffering of our own age if we can continue to pillage the earth that might relieve it. Do we believe the old myths that we teach, or the new modern versions—from pollution comes the plague?

In the humanities there is no Final Solution, only the possibility of a change of heart and a return to man in his wholeness. About that, it's clear beyond doubt that we have been delinquent. No matter how diligently arrived at, so much of what we teach *feels* useless and inept, disengaged, unnatural, imperious, and, yes, irrelevant. Maybe it is, maybe it isn't. One thing is sure: If we publish it in the bulletin, it is not automatically among the gods. The burden of proof is on us. Only by the intensity of our convictions can we preserve them, and only by incorporating in our style of teaching what we've discovered at the dissolving margins of our disciplines. Far more can be done with the whole environment of learning to incorporate the excluded life which anthropologists, psychologists, and poets have recovered and, now, the students demand. Far more can be done to reorganize the masses of information sprawling behind us in history—indeed, one of the enormities of history. Since *The Waste Land* we've been shoring up fragments against our ruin, without seeing that the poem is not only an object to be studied but also, like the collage or assemblage, a prototype of new configurations of knowledge which can be encompassed in

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a lifetime and made useful in a life.

There's nothing ignominious or anti-intellectual in yielding to the student or, to negotiate our inadequacies, recognizing him as a peer. W. H. Auden said of Freud in a memorial poem: "All he did was to remember/ Like the old and be honest like children." The students we teach, born in the atomic age, are the children of darkness. If they become obscene, think of what goes on there in the darkling world of anti-matter where foul is fair. Freud, among others, warned that we would have to deal with them differently:

> . . . he would have us remember most of all
> To be enthusiastic over the night
> Not only for the sense of wonder
> It alone has to offer, but also
>
> Because it needs our love: for with sad eyes
> Its delectable creatures look up and beg
> Us dumbly to ask them to follow;
> They are exiles who long for the future.
>
> That lies in our power. They too would rejoice
> If allowed to serve enlightenment like him,
> Even to bear our cry of 'Judas,'
> As he did and all must bear who serve it.
>
> Our rational voice is dumb; over a grave
> The household of Impulse mourns one dearly loved.
> Sad is Eros, builder of cities,
> And weeping anarchic Aphrodite.

Look at the students: even the most cataleptic are asking questions, waiting for us. What do we have to answer?—that our institutions must be preserved? I'm not saying they shouldn't be preserved, but why? In their highest idealism the students have taken a cue from Ivan Karamazov, fanatic and cut to the brain with injustice. Our institutions are worthless, they say, if they contribute, despite all wisdom, to the deprivation of powers and to the collective lust to kill. To respond to this does not mean surrendering what we hold to be good, true, and beautiful; only that no mere *argument* for the good, true, and beautiful will prevail. They must be convinced at blood level, or they will not be con-

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vinced at all. To them, a conviction is a demonstration. If we are growing tired of the idea of blood consciousness, then we'd better change our reading lists.

If we really mean what we teach, there's no repose ahead for the university. Up to now, the initiative has come from the students, but it grows increasingly hard for us to insist on the disengagement necessary for sober thought. That's disturbing, but it's not too great a price to pay for a revival of faith in our best students, to whom no particular subject is, finally, more relevant than any other, though a man in needless pain or a man dying before his time, unjustly, is more relevant than any subject. Can we argue with that? I don't think even Milton would argue with that, who said as good kill a man as kill a good book, for that was prefaced by his refusal to praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed. The greatest blessing of our educational system is the refusal of our students to be cloistered, in systems, departments, requirements, or a ratiocinative meditativeness that can destroy. For the time being, we have to be where they are, or we are, for the sake of the future, no where at all.

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ROGER W. SHATTUCK

Thoughts on the Humanities

A DISCUSSION of the humanities demands that we recognize a few major premises. Here are two.

The faculty of the mind, the power of thinking, is at its seat one and undivided. Despite a long tradition that recognizes the diversity of the mind's activities and has provided us with polar terms like reason and sensibility, logic and intuition, dialectic and poetry, there exists no telling evidence of an essential division of thought itself. Two of the most powerful minds of this century, Valéry and Freud, turned their attention to Leonardo da Vinci because they saw in him the greatest example in history of this unity given full expression in art and in science. Freud and Valéry also considered themselves equally artists and scientists in a broad sense.

The obviously very different forms of discourse and apprehension we all employ need not be attributed to distinct areas or faculties or types of mind; rather the mind performs at highly varied speeds and intensities. In speaking of the humanities, we do not refer to any special or limited portion of the total mind. At the source of consciousness, there is no fissure. The instantaneous leap of understanding or discovery testifies either to long preparation or exceptional talent. The tremendous velocity of a "creative" mental act does not preclude tracing it through coherent steps that re-establish its continuity. We should not have to refer back to the quadrivium and the trivium to decide that the outward activities of the mind can be divided in many ways quite unlike the divisions acceptable to us. Throughout these shifts of emphasis, which fascinated St. Augustine and William James as deeply as Lévy-Strauss, the mind remains one.

Any significant truth is unteachable; only the husk can be conveyed. It may be that we encounter here a universal law

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known in biology: Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny. I know intimately the work of only a few great minds: All of them without exception state or imply in a significant context that each person must learn for himself, from his own experience. There is no substitute. Ignorance or insensitivity to this principle led for centuries to the didactic principle in art; extreme awareness of the principle led to the autonomy of art—and, in the eyes of some, to its immorality. Art for art's sake is very much with us.

In talking about education or about art, however, we would do far better to seek beyond didacticism and autonomy toward a heuristic principle. A novel or a work of history in the humanistic sense does not and cannot directly teach truth or wisdom. It offers us a process, a series of events in our minds, which will tend to bring a responsive individual nearer to his own truth and his own wisdom by recognition or anticipation of his own experience.

The principle of unteachability has two corollaries. We learn, if at all, through correcting error. The process of education consists in setting up the best provisional orderings of life we are capable of and then knocking them down. This binary rhythm has been lost sight of in the United States because of our reluctance to teach a rigorous traditional program in the high schools. In college there is not much for the teacher to break down by advancing further in the field. In fact, the most basic dilemma of the college teacher is that he is forever having to erect by himself the structure he will proceed to demolish. It is too much to ask. The two actions cannot be performed effectively so close together. The excitement and the struggle are lost.

The questions posed in the initial letter of invitation to the conference lead me to two further statements.

First, one of the pervasive and troublesome debates raging in almost every field of teaching today opposes the values of *comprehensive coverage* of a field not to specialization, but to *relevance.* Because of the vast dimensions of what is available to know, and because exhaustiveness bears no relation to method, relevance makes a sensible point of departure. Furthermore, by starting from issues and dilemmas that most trouble us now, we shall eventually arrive at perspectives far removed from our own and useful to us. Relevance is not a limitation of a field, but our entry into it. This conclusion would be too much of a commonplace to merit mention were the answer to another troublesome

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question not found here. Does the scholar in the humanities formulate as well as analyze values? The discovery and presentation of relevance are the arena in which the scholar-teacher must perpetually exercise his critical judgment and face the responsibility of formulating values. The bibliography on Dostoevsky is very long; most of us have read something by him and can talk about him; the man wrote great detective stories. But why, finally, is it worth reading those mammoth books? To articulate their relevance is at least a formulation of value and may be a creation of value. Not all scholars reach this point or even try. They take their values for granted and work within them. But the most compelling undertakings in the humanities are those that question the fundamentals and discover that many of them can be set back in place. But not always. It is not a matter of flippancy or game playing. For instance, don't Kafka's novels turn out to be a beautifully composed and elaborate literary hoax? The answer will tell us something about unity of mind and the unteachability of life.

Second, the letter of invitation asked: How can communication be carried on between scholars and artists in the same field? The question, of course, is backwards. How can scholars and artists in the same field fail to communicate? They fail, I feel, because the university as an institution tends to keep them apart. And when artists are brought into this community, they are asked to conform to a format entirely unsatisfactory to them, to the scholars, and to the students. The one-night-stand lecture provides little communication for anyone, except the uncertain reward of the dazzlement provoked by the rare charismatic performer. The lecture is one of the more depressing customs systematically financed by universities with fat budgets to spend on big names. The glut is registered on the bulletin boards of campuses all across the country.

The visiting professor status is equally unsatisfactory. Artists do not usually want to express themselves Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at eleven according to a predesigned sequence, grade inarticulate papers, give exams, and assign grades. The experienced teacher either dies in conforming to this routine or learns a means of subverting it with imagination. But the artist usually dreads the routine and resigns himself to it.

A different format at least would make it easier for an artist to take part in the essential processes of campus life without

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having to be that kind of captive mascot called "artist in residence." In the Department of Romance Languages at Texas, we have tried an experiment in this context. A French writer—preferably one who has never visited this country before—is invited for a month in the middle of a semester and "takes over" a graduate course already begun by a regular professor along lines agreed upon. The visitor can do what he pleases—blow the course and its program sky high, have the students write poems, decide that he really wants to talk about something else. If necessary, the course can be brought back to earth after his visit without interfering with his freedom.

When we did this for the first time last spring with Nathalie Sarraute, it became clear that she got as much out of the encounter as the students or the professor. The best moment came when she slowly read aloud a whole page of Flaubert and stopped over a particular sentence to say, "*Mais c'est très beau.*" And one student had the courage to ask just what it was she found beautiful. After a silent reluctance to define her reaction, Mme Sarraute drew out of herself a superb and unrecorded sentence about the delicate irony in *Madame Bovary* which places us both inside Emma's mind and at the same time at a great enough distance from her to perceive her pathetic romanticism. They were fine encounters, principally because Mme Sarraute was not expected either to lecture or to teach. She talked, and she was also able to "communicate" about literature with my most erudite colleagues whose scorn for the *nouveau roman* is profound and professional.

Experiments and techniques developed in wartime for the teaching of foreign languages have given us new methods for teaching the understanding and speaking of a foreign language. Thousands of students in high schools and colleges spend several hours a week in a controlled state of suspended intelligence learning to manipulate and permutate simple oral exercises. For the most part, reading comes late and is performed silently and without much checking for accuracy through translation. In fact, in the linguistically decreed order of things (listening, speaking, reading, writing), reading is the stage that receives least attention. It is almost assumed we will do it naturally.

Unless one is going to become a chronic globe-trotter or use the spoken language continually, however, reading is the most valuable part of this learning process—the total skill that will

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carry one to the heart of another culture. But to read, one must pronounce correctly. Learning correct pronunciation of a significant literary text—a poem, for example—is a far different process from learning instant responses to sounds one does not fully understand and whose structure one is not expected to analyze. There is no more depressing sight than a class of college freshmen spending the better part of an hour going through pattern drills, in chorus or individually, and then moving on to do more of the same in a language laboratory.

The whole set of goals now established on the lower level of language teaching in the country—and written into the textbooks, budgeted in the laboratories, and made official in curricula—rests on unproven linguistic assumptions that have not been sufficiently examined to see if they contribute to education in humanities where we place language. No one has demonstrated that active oral command of the language is necessary in order to learn to read—nor even that it vastly accelerates or improves the latter process. No one has demonstrated that mechanical habit formation (that is, without intellectual understanding or analysis) is universally the best way of language learning. And no one has demonstrated that after infancy the learning of reading and writing should come a considerable period after the learning of comprehension and speaking. Yet to varying degrees our entire language instruction has swung in this direction.

I sense that we have reached a moment of pause in language instruction, a flood tide or an ebb tide. Laboratory budgets have become astronomical, and new sophisticated equipment continues to appear. Language instruction has reached a point at which it must either declare its independence from literature (as has happened in a few universities where the linguists have taken it over) or return to the humanistic fold.

We have made many gains in the past few years. We have learned just how fast some students can be pushed toward the command of a foreign tongue, and we have learned something about machines. But I would suggest a new goal for language instruction in our schools and colleges. This goal represents far better than the "audio-lingual" method what we could expect from all students; it applies methods we have learned to teach proper pronunciation; it makes use of worthwhile materials rather than texts written with only pedagogical considerations in mind; and it relates language learning to the rest of a student's program.

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The single yet complex goal for our language teaching should be to teach the student to read a literary text in the foreign language: to read it for full understanding of its construction, its meaning, and its overtones; to read it *aloud* for proper pronunciation, intonation, and emphasis; and to read with the possibility of translation into English, since the exchange between the two languages is an essential part of what studying a foreign language can contribute to our fund of learning. (I say "literary text" in a broad sense—that is, to include Humboldt and Herzen and Durkheim.) This is not the place to expand on such a suggestion. I make it here in the conviction that only such a revision of our assumptions will bring the hours now devoted to the language requirement back into the domain of the humanities.

We spend a good deal of time in universities and colleges developing and defining interdisciplinary programs. It is difficult to give them focus and at the same time to retain flexibility. I have never in my life heard of a single such program that includes training of the body. Yet we have all read Plato, and possibly St. Ignatius and Stanislavsky and Artaud and some Zen or yoga. The most moving film sequence I have seen in many years came in a documentary on China. In the slanting light of dawn a few mature men stood under the trees and went slowly and attentively through the traditional movements of T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Calisthenics we would call it. But this ritual was beautiful and partook visibly of an intellectual concentration and a spiritual presence that I would call dance. Has such training and performance been banned forever from our education?

Between required physical education and the huge spectaculars staged for the public at large, there seems to be a physical desert. Hidden away in a drama department (as dance-drama) or in a physical education department, a college may teach some dance. Modern dance was first recognized as a respectable discipline because a few dancers were enterprising enough to take college degrees and made the whole thing sound intellectual. Ballet has barely found its way into higher education because it requires so long and intensive a period of training. There are good reasons from the point of view of the dancer to keep dance training in conservatories or separate schools, even though this has not so far developed well as a system in the United States.

I speak rather from the point of view of the student, who

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should not be expected to forget entirely about the development of his body from the day he starts seriously cultivating his mind. One can hardly introduce touch-football or frisby flipping into the heart of a program in the arts and sciences. But why have we allowed dance to float so far off to the periphery? I have a feeling that there lurks in us all an undivulged prejudice against the cultivation of the healthy body in large groups because we associate it with Hitler's youth programs, fascism, and effeminate men. If this is so, we have done dancing, dancers, and ourselves a great injustice.

The dance is already the interdisciplinary program we are looking for: music, scenario, aesthetics, physiology, anatomy, dynamics of movement, self-discipline, rhythm, history of ideas, language of gesture, and so on to infinity. A college of arts and sciences that establishes a department of dance in its midst will be doing more to extend the meaning of education than can be done through any other single innovation I can think of. Next time you walk across a campus, try to watch not the rising skirts and tightening pants, but the way everyone walks. It is depressing to think that we are educating a nation of cripples.

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ROBERT COLES

The Words and Music of Social Change

OXFORD, OHIO, is a town of about ten thousand located about forty miles north of Cincinnati. Gentle hills are nearby, and farms and roads go a long way before meeting other ones. The people in rural Ohio are white, conservative, and generally prosperous. They vote Republican. They want their children to get educated, though not "too educated," by which they mean a lot of philosophy and poetry and leftist political science or sociology. True to its name, Oxford claims Miami University and Western College for Women, both of which were founded well back in the nineteenth century, and both of which (so I heard from a doctor in the town) occasionally stimulate the "wrong ideas" in students. "They read everything these days," I can remember him saying. A second later he pointedly added something else: "and they're not fussy about who they let use their buildings."

Yes, indeed, in June of 1964 Western College for Women had offered its entire campus to the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and CORE and God knows who else—for God knows what purpose. The year 1964 right now seems like much more than five years in the past, perhaps five times five years. Yet for all the changes since then the historical significance of the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964 cannot be questioned: A decade of sporadic, lonely, and occasionally fierce social struggle—most of it connected with southern racial problems that arose as a result of the Supreme Court's decision of 1954—had finally become a political crisis of national significance. Black youths who for years had been hunted down by the police and called "delinquent" or "psychopathic" by judges (and sent away for psychiatric observation as well as imprisonment) were now leaders and heroes to hundreds of middle-class white college students—and those students took their ideals

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seriously. They came to Oxford, Ohio, because of those ideals, and after two weeks of orientation they would go to Mississippi because of those ideals.

Within a few days, however, three young men, who had left Oxford well before the rest of us, were found missing and immediately presumed dead. "They're dead, they're absolutely dead," I was told by Stokely Carmichael, with whom I shared the responsibility for a seminar rather wryly and with mock pretense called "methods and techniques of nonviolence." Then Stokely Carmichael believed in nonviolent protest—and believed that yet another demonstration, yet another summer's blood, would bring "freedom, oh delicious freedom, freedom at last," as one song put it. Then, even the death of three comrades was somehow a beginning and not an end, a measure of success rather than a failure. Then I could hear this, record this—on a tape which now can only be considered a document of sorts from another era: "*They killed them, but they can't kill the summer, and what we're going to do this summer. They can't kill our spirit, only our bodies. They'll find out what they did when they murdered our people, our brothers. They'll find that they made us stronger, that we'll beat them sooner, because of what they've done. The whole nation will rally round—but even more important,* we'll *rally round.*"

Well, how did they "rally round"? Did they—the leaders of the project—ask me to talk with people, analyze their obviously increased sense of fear and gloom? Did they suggest a "group" or two, perhaps a bit of "sensitivity training," as it is put by all those "group leaders"? Did they call in advisers—political scientists and social scientists and doctors and lawyers—so that those several hundred young men and women would feel better advised, better protected? Did they rush to Washington, to the newspapers and magazines, to the television cameras?

In fact, they did worry about the collective mood of their new recruits, many of whom had never been south—and now had to face the distinct possibility that a first trip might be a last one. They also wondered about morale, about everyone's morale, about the ways people affect one another when they feel sad and anxious and in a way suspended—not at home, not in Mississippi, "just waiting," which were the words one heard again and again from youths terribly hurt by the sudden loss of three good friends, under conditions that the mind could only imagine, and know to have been as awful as any fantasy could possibly be. And finally, the

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young civil rights workers knew how self-conscious things would have to be: The press didn't have to be sought out, nor the cameras; the entire county had become involved in that project. Again, in Stokely Carmichael's words: *"We'll have to show them, show them we're not afraid, we won't pull back, we'll go there, and stay there and outlast them; show them they can't scare us."*

As we now know, they were not scared, or at least private fears never became a public display of terror, or something else like T. S. Eliot's "compromise, complacency and confusion." How did they manage? How did they dare, continue to dare? Again, in Eliot's word (yes, in this context, Eliot) how could they "presume" —presume to go on, to believe there was any justifiable "going on" in the face of such brute force, such longstanding power, now instantly and arbitrarily summoned? Choices there were: to reconsider, to retreat, to "regroup," to wait and only later go south—and, above all, to consult with advisers, all sorts of knowledgeable and experienced and well-trained people, who I can remember appeared as if out of nowhere, whether or not asked, to have their say, to express fear or worry or, occasionally, a bit of hope.

Suddenly, though, in a couple of days, something quite surprising and wonderful and (I can only use the word) awesome happened. Suddenly hundreds of young Americans became charged with new energy and determination. Suddenly I saw fear turn into toughness, vacillation into quiet conviction. Suddenly waves of emotion swept over that land-locked town of Oxford—to the point that even the doctor I mentioned at the start of this essay became shaken, touched, affected, and, in the end, very much moved. What, how, why—those are the words invoked by observers like me, however "involved" or "participant" or whatever we are. For a while I wanted to banish all the questions, all the analytic propositions and scientific explorations that my nicely trained mind could not help raising with itself. Yet eventually I realized how needlessly protective I was—of students, black and white, whose words and deeds and purposes could quite definitely tolerate any scrutiny I felt driven to make.

"*How did we do it?*" I had asked him how he and others had converted a grim piece of news into an unforgettable occasion, an almost spectacular kind of moral and philosophical experience for an entire midwestern town, and he replied right off by asking himself my question. In a way, the earnest way he did so should have been my clue, but as it turned out I didn't need one, because

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he was prepared to go on: *"We never thought we had anything to 'do.' We had to get going, and we decided the best way to get going was to get going."*

I knew there was more to say, because I had been with him and others at Oxford all along. I had in fact seen and heard a powerful and lovely and stirring spectacle (that is the word) take place over a span of two days. Still, he was right; it had developed, grown, almost bloomed, and if guile had helped things along, the unself-conscious, direct, spontaneous character of the activities and meetings—which in fact were *rites*—cannot be denied. So, I asked him simply to tell me what had occurred. I knew and he knew that I knew the facts. I had been part of the scene. But I felt his account would tell me something else—not facts, not data, not even clues to over-all "attitudes" or emotional states. I suppose I believed that the effort of narrative can be revelatory (not revealing), and even redemptive (not therapeutic). I suppose I believed that in talking, in telling, we could not so much clarify as be properly amazed and surprised and, yes, even stunned. In this century, among the West's intelligentsia, the look backward has become such a sober and serious matter. We are puzzled or troubled. We try to find the first causes of our bewilderment, our present pain. But perhaps old sorrows can indeed make themselves felt later —but in new assertions of pride and wonder and hope, as I discovered in Oxford, Ohio, when I saw tired, hurt victims of the civil rights movement: *"If things had fallen apart there'd have been no Summer Project, no Selma, nothing. They'd have known they could scare us, make us back down. There'd have been no civil rights laws—on voting and all the rest. I know you can't two years later say that, say it was one point in time that was so important; but I can say no* other *moment was more important, that I know.*

"We thought about what to do, and then we fell to arguing a lot. Finally we decided we should become religious, real religious. We decided we should go to church—and until then we didn't even know where the chapel was on that campus. We decided we had to get together, really *get together. We decided we all had to stop and think, that's what, that's what we kept saying, stop and think and figure out the meaning of things. It was as if we wanted everyone to become philosophical—and face it, real head-on: to risk their lives or not to risk their lives; to fight or surrender; to know what's important, really important, and stand up for it, or run home and say later, later—because it's too dangerous now.*

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"That's the kind of thing we wanted them to think about, the kind we *thought about, the few of us sitting up through the night wondering what to do. And we started asking each other what to say, what to do, what to read in the church, what to sing. We wanted each volunteer to stop and think—but feel close to the next person, who would be doing the same thing. We wanted to have silence, so people could ask themselves things, and we wanted a lot of talking, too—a lot of music and arms locked together, all that you know—so that people wouldn't be scared, at least not too scared."*

Well, I knew the rest. I took part in the rest. I heard the folk songs. I heard the poems, the selections from John Donne and Shakespeare and Dostoevsky and Thoreau and Tolstoy and W. H. Auden. I heard the phonographs play Beethoven and Brahms and Berlioz. I saw several hundred young men and women—black and white, rich and poor, northern and southern—form themselves into a huge circle, hands held together or arms locked into one another. I saw that circle close in on itself and then expand. I saw it break up into smaller circles: to dance and embrace and shout words of sadness and determination and anger and outrage and pity and vengeance and most of all soreness, in all the senses of that old and powerful word.

In between the public moments, the times when we were all together, all listening or singing or praying or reciting, we went off in two's and four's and six's to wonder and be afraid and straighten up suddenly and say yes, not no. Then, too, the writers and artists and composers appeared, as if out of nowhere. I was astonished at the sight of those books—among people told to come with very little, to travel light, to bring only essentials. Essentials they brought: *The Plague, Crime and Punishment, Light in August, The Mind of the South, All the Kings Men,* the poems of Wallace Stevens or W. C. Williams or W. H. Auden. In a moment of fear, of decision, of social struggle, I saw books, inert books (and symphonies and post cards from this or that museum) become—well, if it has to be said that way, "relevant" and "useful." In those desperate moments, when actually more than the outcome of a Summer Project hung in balance, what can loosely be called the "humanities" had an emphatic and remarkable effect on a large group of bewildered, mourning, hesitant activists—who then wanted and needed wisdom, not knowledge, a sense of moral purpose rather than "goals" or "programs" or "data" or "interpretations."

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In a way, as an observer and a friend, I found myself taken aback. The Bible and the Classics figured prominently in my life. My parents—correctly I believe—had little faith that some combination of technological ingenuity, socialist politics, and psychoanalytic discovery would put us all within sight of the New Jerusalem. By the same token, they urged upon me an ethical code grounded in the past, the distant past. I came to college familiar with Jeremiah and Isaiah; with Matthew, Mark, and Luke; indeed with St. John's apocalyptic Revelations; and I came there grounded in years and years of Latin and Greek. In contrast, most—though not all—of the white college students in that Mississippi Summer Project had spent a good deal of time weighing the "meaning," the "message," the "value" of books I simply (and all too naïvely) considered novels, or poems, or "contemporary literature," pure if not so simple.

So, as I look back and think about it all, I have to conclude that for a long time I felt closer to the black youths from the rural South than many of the northern students. For example, I favored the Supreme Court's 1954 decision (striking down the legal fiction called "separate-but-equal" schools) because what was right—ethically, philosophically, religiously, *humanly*—had to prevail. It seemed almost (and literally) blasphemous that the Court had to bulwark its decision with all sorts of psychological and sociological testimony from people like me. Many times during our night-long talks and arguments I heard the Supreme Court's wisdom upheld as modern, as sophisticated; as tied to discoveries made here or there, and written up in this or that book—only to hear in reply (from a young black "fieldworker," a civil rights activist) an outburst that came across almost like a gospel-song. Here is one cry, recorded in Hattiesburg: *"You all have your books, and you tell me I've got to read* The Plague *(is it?) and something else, the one with the long title about 'praising men,' and the poems you have. But to me it's in plain sight what has to be done and I don't need anyone telling me from a book. My book, it's the Bible. When I was a little kid, my mother would tell us we should listen to what the Book says, and someday, if we're lucky, we'd get a chance to* do *something, and then the Bible would tell us how to behave and do it right. Maybe—I admit it—maybe you need a lot more than the Bible today; but as I hear some of you talk—well, I say to myself, they've got their bibles and I've got mine, and when you come right down to it, there might not be too much difference. The guy*

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who wrote The Plague, *he must have been sweating about some of these things; like Matthew and Mark did, they surely did. And maybe the one thing the summer has taught me is: with different people, you get different saints that they listen to. In fact, I don't believe there's a man alive who doesn't have at least one saint he listens to, even if we'd call him a devil, not a saint. I'll bet over in the Klan meeting, over there across town, they're quoting somebody, yes sir."*

His closing verb had summarized a lot of that summer. We had all been quoting people left and right, day and night. Lines or whole stanzas from Auden or Spender had been underlined, or paragraphs from Agee and Camus bracketed. Songs were sung not only for "release" or to achieve solidarity, but to say something, to declare, to affirm and sing out.

Still, in the face of that experience, and others like it, if less dramatic, I hear the humanities questioned. Are they of any value, of any possible interest to today's students? Yes, it is nice to read a novel sometimes, and listen to a symphony; but the world is full of immediate problems and enormous challenges, all of which requires from young people an almost single-minded sense of competence and purpose. And, of course, some who claim to speak for literature and art can be impossible: deliberately arrogant, aloof, condescending, priggish, stuffy, and all the rest. Writers and artists sweat and suffer and finally manage a lucid moment here and there—only to be worked over by cold and mannered pedants and declared their property. No wonder many people, even among the well-to-do, are put off or walk away in disgust and anger. Yet in spite of everything—the fake and self-appointed connoisseurs, the smug literary coteries and the petty, artistic salons, the schools that thrive on jealousy and exclusiveness and hauteur and vengeance—the world's Melvilles and Faulkners, its Balzacs and Tolstoys and Picassos continue to confront us with everything, with pain and suffering and tenderness and love, with moral choices and ethical conflicts and most of all with an effort toward coherence, toward a vision that inspires, that summons, that makes us, at least from time to time, a little more than we usually are, than we possibly can be for very long. Perhaps what I am trying to say can be best said by someone else. Here is what one leader of the Mississippi Summer Project said to me in Greenville, right near the great mythic river, in late July of 1964: *"Well, we did it, I don't know*

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how, but we did. We all were scared. Who wouldn't be after what they did in Neshoba County, so fast—like a challenge to us. You ask where it came from, the guts it took to stay in Oxford, and then drive down here. I don't know. You find it, you find it in people—and I guess you call it guts or courage or things like that. You're scared, but you've asked yourselves some questions and find the answers. You know, it's like living in a novel or a play this whole summer is. Everything is bigger, bigger than usual—the way writers picture things they write."

Yet, four years ago in Mississippi during one of those interminable "soul sessions" uncannily and unself-consciously used by civil rights workers to weaken fear and trembling, I heard another message, this time an outcry: *"Whatever we do, it'll be the white man who will benefit the most. We'll ask for school desegregation and they'll get better schools. We'll say that we get no medical care at all, and they'll get health insurance and more medical schools. We'll criticize the values of this society, and they'll start asking themselves what they really believe in. The Negro may come out of all this with the vote, but it'll be white people again who really win. They'll have better schools and better doctors and better everything because we helped wake them up. Our pain made them look at themselves, and then they said, 'Here, boy, here's a band-aid'—while they went rushing off to the hospital to try and get their* own *sickness cured."*

Of course I knew he was "upset" then—because a freedom house had been dynamited the night before. I also knew how *complicated* things are. I could allow him his stark, polemic rhetoric —and go on to remind myself how much he had omitted from his "analysis." Yet I could not forget the important point he was making. America's present-day political and racial unrest has strengthened the hand of all sorts of social and educational critics. We in the upper-middle-class academic and professional world have indeed been asked to look both inward and outward—asked once again to look at what we are doing and for whom. Our assumptions and values have indeed been questioned. Our purposes have been attacked. We have been called narrow-minded, parochial, self-centered. We are not "involved"; our interests and work are not "relevant." We are race-bound, class-bound. We are crusty and snobbish. We are dying.

All those charges have to be answered. Here I can only list

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some ideas and feelings I have acquired during ten years of what I suppose could be called "field work"—done by a child psychiatrist in the South and the North, among Appalachian families, migrant farm families, and ghetto families.

I have learned to question a number of medical and psychiatric tenets I had never before doubted. I have learned to give "ordinary" people more credit for courage, guile, discretion, and, yes, those "higher things" like sensibility, restraint, tact, generosity. I have learned to draw upon Ellison's *Invisible Man* instead of a book called *The Mark of Oppression*, which offers "in depth"—of course! —psychiatric case studies of the Negro. I have learned that one does not have to be a political or social or philosophical "romantic" to comprehend and appreciate the kind of truth that binds a Faulkner to a Tolstoy, an Agee to a Bernanos, a Simon Weil to an Orwell.

I think that more than anything else I have learned to *know* what social scientists know, but *see* what a Eudora Welty, a Flannery O'Connor, a Richard Wright, a Robert Penn Warren, a Walker Percy demand and suggest and hint and urge one like me to see. What a far from tragic poet has called "the things of this world" defies all categories, man-made and inborn.

Above all, in Roxbury's ghetto, and among people grimly and all too easily and condescendingly dismissed as the "backlash" I continue to see evidence of both hope and failure. I hear strong language that is unharnessed. I see visions, valuable and imaginative visions, that are on the point of being crushed or abandoned. I see children paint poetry and put to word the landscapes of their minds. I watch them come home from school—tired and bored and ready in a back alley to reclaim their humanity, their right to test themselves and learn about one another.

And on the other side of town, "across town" as the children put it, I hear college students and college teachers speak and think in language that on good days can perhaps cause a resigned smile. Ghetto children need and crave coherence, a sense of what the world is truly about. But students and graduate students and professors can stand a few lessons too. Clear, direct, and strong language is no luxury, no sign of literary talent. Our words reveal our thoughts. Cloudy minds and murky disciplines need more than a few hundred editorial assistants to "clean things up."

We the enlightened cram our children with facts and figures. We ask our teachers to be sensitive, to understand psychology, child

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development, the nature of prejudice, the facts of "group experience." We offer "the new math," and we crowd our classrooms with teaching machines to make French easier and (I suppose, soon) Chinese possible. But I talk with and teach college students who do not know how to struggle for a straight thought and put such a victory down on paper. They may know that they can't "write," but they do not know that they have been denied what they must (and can) have, a mind that works—lives and breathes rather than digests facts, theories, and "data."

I hear from some that Henry James or T. S. Eliot is reactionary; or Carson McCullers merely odd in a clever and powerful way. If you would know America, take courses in "race relations" and political theory. Know the social system, the power structure, the latent this and the unconscious that. And know the facts, man, the facts—who owns what and who is bigger than whom. Yet I believe I find the whole world in the letters of Van Gogh, not to mention his paintings; in a story by Flannery O'Connor; in one of Eliot's quartets; in a "decadent" novel by that great, curious, stubborn, long-winded, ambitious, shrewd observer and artist Henry James. I believe that ghetto children and suburban children can learn the most important "facts" that can possibly be learned from Rembrandt's "Life of Christ," from his canvasses and from the Scripture that he brings alive: how long man has suffered and how much man can do to redeem himself, to win a little ground from life's built-in ironies, ambiguities, and terrors—enemies far stronger than particular men or even social systems.

Finally, I believe that we can actively struggle with the world, but also sit back and wonder at things, understand them and be amused or scornful at how "it all" works out, comes to pass, whatever. And I believe that in "culturally deprived" and "culturally disadvantaged" ghetto children we in medicine and law and business and education, we right in the middle of the universities, see much more of ourselves than we dare realize. All one need do is read the themes, the papers, the reports, the journals, go to the movies, watch television, and hear the talk in clubs and parlors to know how far we have come from our own language, from the logic and dignity of words, from the writer's vision, the artist's (or artisan's) craft, the theologian's or philosopher's or anyman's puzzled, hungry, alarmed, hopeful, skeptical search—for whatever scrap of sense and sensibility can be and must be found, "world without end."

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But whatever troubles "us," the well-off and supposedly well-educated, we still have all of "them" to trouble us. They just don't learn how to read very well. They seem to have their own music, which we find and treasure—out of our sophisticated interest in everything, everywhere, however "primitive" or "parochial." Yes, in the Delta, in Appalachia, out west on reservations, they have their jazz and their folk songs, their crafts and ballads and myths and rites—but how, exactly how, are they going to become more literate, more industrious, more like us: able to read and understand Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* but, most of all, *feel* the book's truth—that is, remember it as an experience out of one's life?

At this point, with such questions in mind, I have to get very specific and, God forbid, talk about "educational materials" that I have met up with—seen, heard sung, watched being used—again, down in Mississippi, but also up north in the ghetto of a large city. In 1965 I saw a Head Start program get under way, but a most unusual one: hundreds of small children from sharecropper cabins all over Mississippi's Delta were suddenly confronted with schools that meant business, schools that were not meant to be a mere formality, a half-gesture of "separate-but-equal" education, but schools that had behind them—oh, I suppose it could be called a "philosophy," though I would like to call it a burning sense of conviction. Here is how one of the teachers described the effort she and others were making: *"We believe we can reach these little kids, and be reached by them. We believe that they can learn—learn a million things—if we keep believing that they can learn. The trouble is that for too long their teachers have been convinced that they're hopeless. (A lot of them never even go to school more than a day or two a week, and they drop out when they're about ten). And the trouble is that a lot of the teachers, the more sophisticated ones—the outsiders who come here—keep on dwelling on how* bad *things are in the state, and how peculiar and different these kids are. You know: they have a special culture, and they don't trust you, or understand you, and all the rest. Well, they* do *have a special culture. It's different, the way they live. That's for sure. But they are children, and they can learn, and they can desire to learn. You have to forget yourself, and stop trying to impose on them all you've gone through, all the rote memory you had to accept, all the business of speaking clearly*

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and learning the alphabet and reading the books your parents read —the Dick and Jane books that are handed down from one generation to the other. You have to get around words. *Remember, black people were slaves—still are, in many respects. They were told to keep quiet, to mind their every step, to obey, obey, obey. They were denied the right to have a family, to vote—to build up a social and political tradition. They were kept from books and magazines and newspapers. Their children were kept ignorant and poor. They were called 'uppity' if they spoke out, even spoke at all. No wonder they learned to be quiet, to fear words and distrust talk. No wonder they don't have books—most of them are lucky to eat half-well. But they are men and women, and they see the world and respond to it—and from that comes a whole culture. I mean 'culture' in the sense of style of looking at the world, in the sense of a particular form and structure to one's vision, one's feelings about things.*

"You—you people talk about 'cultures' and 'sub-cultures' as if men are only what they do and think: they live here and pray there and have this custom or that one. But the poorest sharecroppers developed secret, clever things: musical rhythms, sayings, songs. You can call it folk music and of course jazz; but the point is to recognize that it isn't just you, the outsiders, who 'appreciate' such things, who see the beauty and subtlety in them. Poor, illiterate blacks sung and spoke their way to—to jazz, to the blues, to a rich tradition that we love to enjoy on our long-playing records. And to make a long story short: we believe that these children can learn, can learn like thousands and thousands of blacks have learned, learned every day—even though they'd be found on the bottom of every I.Q. test in America. We believe they see and hear and listen and feel things going on inside them and look outside themselves and take stock of the world and figure out how they have to act and what they have to say and how the world is run and who runs it—all of which is learning, I'll tell you, sad learning. So, we go ahead and do things, with all that in mind, I guess."

I spent a summer (1965) watching what she and others like her and hundreds of Mississippi's black children (ages three to six) all did, together. I have to admit it, I was surprised—as were others like me, who came from all over the country to observe, inspect, study, whatever, and left, invariably, scratching their puzzled heads. Children from rural cabins were learning all sorts of

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things: first how to own and wear clothes; then, how to eat food and enjoy it and come to believe that there will be yet another meal, yes sir and for real; and finally, how to do things and make things and look at things (and at one another) and, in sum, breathe life into the body's senses and the mind's already developing sensibilities. Paints, crayons, dances, movies, walks, exercises—all of that and more enabled children to become alert and delightfully self-conscious. But one child told me something I hope I never forget, particularly when I congratulate myself and others on a Head Start Project well done, or any other achievement: "*You go to the Head Start place and they want you to see everything and tell it to the teacher—just like my little sister does when she comes shouting at me and pulling on me, to tell me that she saw a bird up there, and did I see it.*" Her sister was then two years old, not quite eligible for Head Start. Does anyone really believe that "preliterate" and "illiterate" people don't learn, learn, learn—from the beginning of life on?

The schools I visited in Mississippi had at last caught up with the possibilities that exist in all children, even the children of sharecroppers. In Boston's ghetto, in Appalachia, in migrant labor camps, I have seen young, idealistic (sober, not starry-eyed) youths do similar things: such as give cameras to "culturally deprived" children, who then take pictures and movies—that we all might not have expected, might not have looked for or dreamed possible, from "them," from "poor them." I know that many photographers or movie directors would be fascinated by what such boys and girls have done, though I am not so sure about any number of thoroughly accredited and certified teachers.

Can there really be any doubt that the "humanities" mean everything to children—whose eyes and ears are still alive, have yet to be killed. Elizabeth Bowen knew that "death of the heart" is, to use the expression, a "cross-cultural phenomenon," as anyone knows who lives near rich and well-educated parents, whose children have learned how to glut themselves with facts and utterly dread a mere suggestion, an unanswerable question, a little bit of mystery. By the same token, poor and illiterate children die every moment—in the end spiritually, if not earlier because of hunger, malnutrition, and untreated diseases of all sorts. Yet how many people are really hopeless, really damned outright and forever? In 1965 I watched young black children from Holmes County, Mississippi, sit around a teacher and listen to her as she read some of

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William Faulkner's pastoral writing. Yes, a lot went unnoticed; indeed, a lot was bothersome or thoroughly unclear. But every once in a while—and, I noticed, with increasing frequency as the minutes followed one another—a word or a phrase or an observation struck the right chord: in a child here, another one over there, and from time to time in all of us. And last year, I heard students at Harvard—who already love records like "The Original Sonny Boy Williamson" or "The Blues of Alabama" or "The Sound of the Delta"—marvel at some photographs taken by a group of children from Boston's ghetto. They're amazing, we all thought. They remind one of postwar Italian movies—you know, *Open City* and *Bicycle Thief*—where violence is everywhere; yet the lives portrayed were meant to show that beauty lives on—in people crushed by wars, revolution, and a history of virtual slavery and poverty. It took an artist like DeSica to pull all that together, the sadness and misery with the stubborn, lovely pride and the hope that never quite disappears.

For generations writers and artists and musicians—the men and women who *make* the humanities—have done that, have tried to give life and coherence to our ambiguous, ironic fate on this earth. For generations to come it will be the same: People will live, and some of them will write about it all, sing about it, draw and paint it, capture it on film. Certainly those who live life (whatever kind of life) and those who use their senses and then their minds to record and comment on life, in all its variety and complexity, have no quarrel with one another, are not "alienated" from one another, do not naturally feel "irrelevant" to one another. But in between them stand us—the mediators, the scholars and educators and teachers and just plain citizens—with our own ideas about what is possible, appropriate, suitable, "right" or "wrong" for children, and of course for writers and artists, too. I fear the rub is there, where the writer, say, in all his clever and calculated and summoning childishness is kept away from his audience, the child and the child in us, by censors of all sorts, who often enough are murderers, pure and simple. In the words of that Head Start teacher I quoted: "*Some teachers, some people, they don't really like writers and artists, so they turn them into dust, and make the kids try to eat the dust, and if the kids start vomiting—well, it just goes to show you that the writers are no-good, or not suitable for such kids, or don't speak their language, the right language. Can you beat that for dishonesty?*" I fear the answer is no.

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Yet, teachers can be different. They can in fact learn with their students, offer them fire, spirit, and force; offer them ideas and doubts and questions; offer them a willingness to experiment, admit error, take risks and chances. Writers, artists, composers—all of them mean to teach, to enliven; even as the rest of us, young and old, crave the breath of life that their stories, pictures, and songs all offer. If Tolstoy or Faulkner or Mozart or Big Joe Williams, the bluesman from Mississippi's Delta, cannot bring professors and students, older people and youths together, make them one and all readers and listeners, human beings who share and respond to something that transcends time and space, then who and what possibly can?

This question of Theodore Roethke's was rhetorical:

> Stupor of knowledge lacking inwardness—
> What book, O learned man, will set me right?

He knew that no book can provide the Word, that any book, however lovely and even exalted, can be inadequate to life's awful moments. But as a poet he persisted; he wrote his words, "words for the wind," and he hoped they would inform, excite, alarm, deliver courage and something one can only call a moment of quietness, a truce for a brief spell in the wars we all know. I believe that the winds he enriched naturally seek us out in classrooms as well as in a field, a hill, a place lonely and apart. Do we hear—we together, we in those classrooms? We can hear. *Do* we, though? Or does the life of a man like Roethke, his vitality, become his lyrics, scare us to—oh, in fact, scare us to death?

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R. J. KAUFMANN

On Knowing One's Place: A Humanistic Meditation

But what is the voice of the present? Nothing.—Diderot

Love calls for time and we have hardly time for justice.—Camus, *Les Justes*

PLEASE EXCUSE me if I tell two little parabolical stories here at the beginning. In 1941 while the Battle of Britain raged—still then a very doubtful *agon*, not yet a comforting overture to Hitler's defeat —a young Oxford don was confronted along High Street by a strong, governessy, and middle-aged female compatriot who seized the loose lapels of his academic gown. Harsh with righteous indignation she demanded: "Young man why aren't you out fighting for civilization?" "Madam," he replied, "I am civilization." In another country, as this same war began in 1939, the philosopher Nicolai Hartmann was greeted as he entered his graduate seminar by students who told him this was their last seminar before being called up to fight. They begged him to bring his philosophical insight to bear on "the crisis." He shrugged, saying: "*Immer gibt es eine Krise: Zuruck zum Text!*" ("There's always a crisis; back to the text!") and resumed his exegesis of the fragments of Heraclitus.

Rehearsing these accounts I feel the pressure of a newly conditioned doubt. When does dedicated poise pass over into the kind of callousness to immediate historical actuality which makes us cringe inwardly when we recognize as our possible morphological counterparts the glossolaic dumb-dumbs who dilated on marginal issues in the remote and self-congratulating rhetoric of second-rank Renaissance humanism while just beyond their strained eyes great men were building a new world?

What we stand for has never prevailed as the dominant strain in any major culture. At best we are a rich, recessive strain—men

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protected and paid to bestow our patient care on elements in our constitutive, social fabric which simply cannot take care of themselves. We are not central nor are we dispensable. We *are* needed. Only social orders qualitatively *in extremis,* like Nazi Germany, have tried to expel us utterly; only societies inviting catastrophe, like the *ancien régime* of Tocqueville's classic analysis, have been inclined to take us too literally. Humanists move along a tightrope in troubled times. Somewhere between Trotsky's contentious claim that, "Only a participant can be a profound observer," and the Chinese sages of Yeats' "Lapis Lazuli" with the cast of tragic gaiety in "their ancient, glittering eyes," there is a balancing point or, to change the metaphor, an uncomfortable middle ground we must cultivate, where without foolish claims to have escaped from all historical necessity we can achieve our own authentic relationship to that great humanist Albert Camus' enabling dogma: "I know with certainty, that a man's work is nothing but the long journeying to recover, through the detours of art, the two or three simple and great images which first gained access to his heart."

How are we to go about being *helpful* in hard times without being *distracted* from our "true path"? This essay is a very undogmatic meditation on this question.

Perhaps the most crucial decision facing any historian who seeks to transcend mere narration is this one: With how large a temporal interval must he frame his pivotal material? The French Revolution, for example, assumes very different signification when it is viewed within a time interval which includes the rise and fall of Napoleon and the subsequent era of Metternichian reaction from what it might have were we standing at 1790, or 1793 looking back only to 1776. The Cold War—though many current leaders have failed to enlarge their interval of critical judgment—looks very different in 1969 with Stalin's death, China's rise, and the rapid ideological diversification of the family of new Asian and African nations from what it did in 1947 when the Truman Doctrine was articulated, or in 1952 after the Berlin crisis but before Stalin's death in the next year. Nothing is harder to postulate for purposes of evaluating the condition and future of the humanities in American universities than this: At what point are we in the current "student revolution"? Are we embarking on a gigantic and long-term revaluation of teacher-student and student-administrative relationships? Or is the current unrest a direct causal result of the Vietnam War with its sad advertisement of the exploitation of one generation by another,

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so that an intelligent liquidation of this mistaken enterprise in military politics will effect a quick sedation of student hostilities? Or are we at the beginning of a "union-management" struggle analogous to the inchoate labor struggles of the early-nineteenth century with the difference being that now "brain workers" rather than manual workers are demanding more say over their conditions of work?

For, it is certainly true, as the interval between a more or less fixed biological maturity and a progressively deferred, sociological maturity grows more prolonged in our technocratic age, a very large percentage of our working population is being trained for service as opposed to productive functions and is being held in a contingent and subject status while the conditioning for predesignated roles is completed. If we are left in serious doubt as to whether we are at the beginning, middle, or near the end of a critical social struggle—and I think we must accept such doubts—then it is hard to say to what we humanists are being asked to adjust; how much of our practical human future is to be under stress; and how deep therefore our theoretical accommodations must reach.

The least sensitive among us are beginning to feel the irritations of political polarization. We wonder how much is owing to past evasions in settling our debt to our black citizens; how much a product of the professional and managerial classes' exchange of membership in corporations for their earlier citizenship in the urban community. We are very ignorant of the composition of our own central problems, though perhaps there can be a redeeming camaraderie in this common ignorance if we have the will to achieve it. For humanists—whose vocation is one of sponsoring deep-reaching reconciliations to our common lot as men—the problem is particularly embarrassing. Such an elementary entry in our lexicon of values as the definition of "good citizenship" in our human enterprise is blurred or elusive. If we are custodians of moral sanity and servants of permanent human values as is often claimed for us, just how are we now to prosecute these roles without impertinence?

Lately, we have been led by men who have voluminous answers, but seem unable to detect or recognize any of the vital questions; so that much that our political leaders are doing consists of energetic demonstrations of energy without betraying any purchase on critical questions. In middle-life, being pushed too close to the role of the unacculturated child in the parable of the "Emperor's New Clothes" is discomfiting, for we humanists are conditioned to

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suspect excessively simple answers. But, still, if our humanistic training means anything, then it forces us to see that our national response to reality has undergone a monstrous displacement, until our enemies are misidentified, and our huge communal energies in consequence are tragically askew. These are our framing circumstances; how can we advise ourselves these things being so?

Seizing the humanist's prerogative, I want to begin with one of the classic "beginnings" of our heritage, Dante's "*Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita . . .*" opening his Divine Comedy: "In the middle of the journey of our life" he discovers himself to be in the midst of darkness, having lost the straight clear path ahead. Both a quest and an inquest are required; his great poem is both the register of this inquest and the imaginative frame which makes it possible for him to objectify imperative psychological and spiritual issues. The poem itself is, thus, as much an exercise in self-exploration as a reconnoitering of the world of constitutive values in which he must relocate himself. Dante had to recognize (that is, re-*cognize*) the concentric system of contexts of evaluation within which he could make any sort of choices at all before he could hope to acquire a secure sense of "role" or "purpose" and thereby to establish a workable concord between what history required of him and what he could feel in his private self. Without pretension and with very substantial adjustments of scale, his plight is our own. Humanists nowadays are confronted with their own crisis. It would be unduly dramatic to say we have lost our way, but there is no exaggeration in saying we are uncertain about what steps to take and in what direction. The late Alfred North Whitehead said once that when a man is lost, "He should not say, 'Where am I?', but rather 'Where did everything go?' " Simply: our moral environment has changed so sharply in the past three years that our accustomed responses are no longer reliable.

A younger generation which for at least a decade wore its apathy as an agreeable uniform has stripped this away along with the protective shield of glum deference behind which it weathered a dull historical interval. A therapeutic *détente* has ended prompting all sorts of curdled aggressions and starved hopes to rage in them and among us. Many traditional covenants between teacher and student have lapsed. Suspicion—often disconcertingly good-natured as well as hostile—has superseded more familiar attitudes. Often the teachers most fully subjected to student pressures are those who, with

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some reason, have thought of themselves as reasonably open to novelty and as habitually liberal in thought and act. It is as if these teachers were being judged as "possibly capable of growth" by the young and then challenged to vindicate this honorific judgment by imitating the gestures of militant youth. The normal spectrum of emotional attitudes has been scrambled. In close confrontation with their students, teachers find themselves affectionately condemned or belligerently wooed. A rampant "presentism" often cuts across attempts to get together with students in judging a play of Shakespeare, a novel of Forster, or a meditative essay by Camus. The hard-purchased techniques of interpreting the tone and *tendenz* of such major texts are often looked upon by the most intelligent and energetic students as self-deceiving procedures conducive to false and outmoded exercises in tolerance. And it is tolerance that is suspicious—as if one were evading *true* choices in one's own time when one honors other *possible* choices from the past. One of my most acute and committed students, after a searching study of John Maynard Keynes and of the Bloomsbury group surrounding him, concluded Keynes was to be condemned with special fervor. His unexpressed instrument of judgment was "the good is enemy of the best."

What I am saying, then, is that seasoned humanists working with serious students as this last third of the twentieth century opens must face the fact that those elements of their position which they have grown accustomed to think of as ideologically most secure and therefore most readily negotiable are just what are most suspect. It is the very coherency of some of our attitudes that is most resented. It is as if even modest and provisional certitudes about what must be respected exposed the measure of our compromise with "the system." Such things I take to be the symptoms of axiological crisis. Key terms must now be used in self-conscious quotation marks: "liberal," "reasonable," "enlightened," "sane," "constructive," "tolerant," and so forth; the list is a long one and is drawn from the best-lighted and allegedly least problematic sector of our working vocabulary. At the risk of seeming a little cold, a little too detached, I confess these developments seem to me slightly more interesting than disturbing. They challenge our adaptability by questioning the vitality of our relationship to the world of human choices we profess to study in our chosen role as humanists.

I am assuming, then, as historical fact that some of our inertial assumptions and many of our most reliable procedures as working

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humanists have been called into questions by recent events—and they will probably be even further challenged before we find a new equilibrium in American society and in the universities. Therefore, in this essay I want to ponder what possible modifications of the humanist's fabric of assumptions may be required by contemporary pressures. My concern will be primarily for the inner rehabilitation of the teacher as an agent promoting attitudes and values I have—possibly naïvely—accepted as good. Moreover, in personal response to these challenges, I will try to devise a mode of presentation somewhat more open in structure than would be appropriate if I felt confident I knew what I was talking about. Some "sacred" matters must be treated with affectionate irreverence, some of my own pieties gently abused; so if my manner is not precisely that of a "fastidious assassin," it will be as far as possible from a smug apologia for us "humanists." I invite you then to step with me into the dock, let yourself be sworn in, and listen to parts of the current litany of indictment.

We can accuse ourselves of "psychological imperialism" and of the provincialism of the heart or imagination which generally supplies the soil in which such imperialism grows. We can accuse ourselves of over-valuing the cultivated individual, of supposing our ethic and aesthetic were non-acquisitive when they were not. We can possibly understand if others say American professors have undergone their classic equivalent of *embourgeoisiement;* and this in turn has led us to suppose our central function—one practiced with devotion frequently—has been to form other minds on analogy to our own. However subtle and sophisticated our styles, we have often imposed a catechism of critical responses whereby sensitivity, formal awareness, appreciation of ironies, ability to recognize and to tolerate ambiguities, preserving sympathies, and so forth have been presented as positive achievements and, by extension, as of universal human value. It is quite clear that these mental inflections have advantages in certain historical circumstances—there is nothing shameful about promoting them. It is also very likely that these induced mental habits serve as legitimations of our received value structure and that they help to justify a detachedly superior attitude toward the twists and turns of contemporary history. When a man learns to see changes as "vicissitudes," heart-felt passions as "postures," social programs as "strategies," and savors the "ironies" of what are the wracking conflicts of those whose perceptual field is not so wide-stretched as his own, then he is in danger of being "a

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visitor in his own life"—a fate Tolstoy, whose words these are, explicitly deplored.

It must have occurred to many humanists how sedative a political diet is made by the rich works of Henry James (with his ethic of renunciation), of Joseph Conrad (with his melancholy dignifications of stoical endurance), of James Joyce (whose rebellious impulses eventuate in pedantical olympianism), of T. S. Eliot (whose highest ideological vision for this world is a beleaguered clerisy of elite sensibilities), or of Faulkner and Hemingway (with their distinctive, romanticised variants of proud steadfastness in the face of a universe hardly capable of distinguishing the true from the false). It is a shocking realization to discover that the central achievement of this canon of modern authors is now as recessed in time from our students as Browning and Tennyson were from those of us who first confronted high literature in the '20's and '30's. It takes an immense effort of historical imagination to credit the possibility that the iterated values of these great "modern" writers may seem to our brightest students quite as historically and socially contingent, as arbitrary and as rhetorical as Tennyson did to us then. The question, it must be stressed, is not of any of these writers' quality or worth, but of their alleged contemporaneity and immediate relevance. Different as they are in more than superficial ways, these writers have in common an inflated preference for individuality and a sense of the meanness of social options counterpointed with an ethic which is finally one of ironic accommodation. Thus when we teach them with the care and respect they warrant, what are we doing which reaches beyond transmitting our technical expertise or does more than swell the roster of integrated historical testaments which we help our students *acquire*?

The "new criticism" based itself on the premise that the best art is essentially non-contingent. The premise was a liberating one at its own mildly revolutionary historical moment. It cut critical intelligence free from obligatory artificial sentiments and automatic and distorting moralizations of response. But merely to say this is to indicate that the new criticism with its claim of non-contingent status for art was itself a highly contingent craft, and one readily allied now by intellectual historians with other variants of phenomenological and existentialist thinking, whereby lives and works of art and cultural objects were viewed in as presuppositionless a fashion as the mind could attain to. *Sui generis* could be the text for all these approaches. In actual practice the wisest practitioners

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of this critical method gradually reintroduced evolutionary and contextualist thinking into their work while only the rigid academic recruits to the school—men like Wimsatt and some of the Chicago neo-Aristotelians—lost themselves in the scholastic absurdities of unrealistic formalism, even as they relied heavily on philology, the most relentlessly historicist of disciplines.

But no matter how their practical critical work ramified or grew petrified, their theory infected a whole generation of disciples and students with indefensible prejudices against reportorial openness in art, against all forms of Marxist argument for art's historically determined responses, against the socially diagnostic, polemical, and disciplinary functions of the artist. Activism in art was not so much opposed as categorically denied as a possibility. Much loose and parroted talk can be heard still about "the biographical fallacy," "the affective fallacy," and "the intentional fallacy" as if much-prized ironies and ambiguities do not depend upon extra-artistic social organizations of value, thought, and behavior antecedent to the artist's statement which contradicts or seeks to augment these regulative patterns. Thus humanists have been starting their customary work as critics, interpreters, and expositors with a burden of formalized prejudices, ones which make it somehow self-abdicating to entertain the simple truth that works of art compose reactions to material events. That these reactions may achieve such vibrant fullness that they act in their turn as precipitating events is not in question. Some do, and we call them classic. *Hamlet* is not merely a searching inquest into the grounds of moral responsibility; it provides—as a realized text—a more dynamic definition of moral responsibility than had existed before it was written. Hamlet himself belongs in our cumulative ethical pantheon and is in embodied terms as rigorous an ethical argument as anything in Spinoza, Aristotle, or Bradley.

We humanists have unintentionally devolved into paternalistic and psychological imperialist roles. Prizing the end products of a long liberal humanist inquiry into responsible social postures, we have supposed—wrongly I think—that elaborate, elegiac appraisals of individual choice are necessarily at the center of all serious and civilized morality. Suppose we confront two products of the black ghetto in the classroom. One of them can learn quickly to read a novel by Henry James with unerring sensitivity to Jamesian distinctions. He "understands," and can retail in compact and elegant prose James' distaste for crassness, his belief that the one irremis-

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sible sin is to be oblivious to nuance, and he admires and "correctly" formulates James' worship of stylish renunciation. The other black, equally endowed with raw intelligence, finds James' prose self-regarding, often obscure, and just plain alien in tempo. He hates what he reads; seizes the snobbery, but misses all the exquisite perceptions which possibly vindicate it. He finds James even further sunk in the social scholasticism of a dead elite world than H. G. Wells had. He refuses to honor James at all and for symbolic emphasis rips up his neat paperback text of *The Ambassadors* and throws it out the seminar window. I am willing to wager that—unadvised before the fact of the exemplary nature of this contrast in response—most humanists would feel somehow personally assaulted by this repudiation, would wonder how they had failed to convey James' quality, or would be angered by such intellectual sacrilege—possibly all three feelings would agitate them or any of a number of other perturbations. Anything, I think, except the simple notion that the second black might be right while seeing that his rightness does not imply that the first black is therefore wrong. We have no right to confiscate emergent forms of intellectual vitality in the way we incline to.

Our culture at its best is richly pluralistic; but a strong constitutional contradiction drives us toward a confiscatory uniformity of response. Hypothetically, humanists are capable of entertaining many alternatives. They preside over a groaning table of multifarious answers to the world of experience. They have something of the chameleon's capacity for sympathetic adaptation to different world-views, different modes of imaginative rendering. But, actually, beneath this diversity there is a resistant and even arrogant assumption about this hospitable capacity. It is not that we like lots of different things, but that we honor (and honor ourselves in honoring) many variants of one thing—*the* good, or *the* excellent. This is very abstract and like most treasured abstractions which act as a spiritual axis for any believer we feel personally invested in this. At our best we want to share excellent things with others and are willing to labor hard to make our love appreciable; at worst, we treat these objects of our affection like material possessions, guard them against vandalism of the mind, and tend to use appreciation for them as indices of human development. This is a hard truth, but it is to my view largely undeniable. At this level, we are not even the equal of the priest in his temple; we are the sexton in his sacristy.

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It can be argued that what is distinctive about humanistic study is its special disposition toward the future. The "future" utilized by science is not the same "future" pertinent to humanists. Humanists who grow too absorbed in attempts to imagine the future are dehumanizing themselves. Humanistic study has always had a kind of low-order teleology echoed in its addiction to terms such as "fulfillment," "self-realization," and "goals"; still, we humanists are most gaseous and divorced from imaginative cogency when we try to predict or pre-dramatize the future in contradistinction to intelligent respect for the inertia of reality as in Hamlet's "readiness is all."

Within the complex pluralism of our character structure as highly educated, conscientious citizens of the last third of the twentieth century, we are all partly "scientists of experience," just as we are dependent variables in larger historical movements whose common denominator is their undeniable momentum. Being partly "scientificized," we are easily extirpated from the present and find our own procedures riddled by habitual extrapolations into diagrammatic futures. I do not protest this; individualism has always been a myth in its purist forms. Rich parts of our capacities are pre-empted by the tendencies of social training to draft our future energies. Much of generic existentialist thinking—and particularly its prime diagnostic counter, *angst*—is, consequently, a projection of original sin into the future: producing a kind of "remorse for the future." The huge-scale and mutually qualifying properties of advanced twentieth-century society have new ways of subtracting us from ourselves.

Yet I am uneasy about a possible betrayal of the reflective genius of humanistic study when we lean too eagerly toward the future. As citizens, we must do so willy-nilly; as partly scientificized agents of induced mental habits, we often can do no other. But the matrix of generative humanism to which we appeal lies outside these "functional" areas of our total personality. Humanists seem to me most authentic when they resist being exhausted by mere historicity. There is something balky about us; a brand of holy stupidity obliges us to ask questions about what has been left out of persuasive social syntheses. We are frequently off to one side giving artificial respiration to qualities of experience which, being undervalued in the contemporary ethos, slip into a limbo where all those things not easily "conceived" undergo the pragmatic equivalent of historical death.

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I am not advocating a factitious self-preservation in the graveyard of lost causes. Many of our humanistic departments document most depressingly the facility of this retreat. Our primrose path winds seductively into such precincts of genteel irrelevance and stale sympathies. But I would argue that this result is a defect of intelligence, not of procedure. There is much in the human record which is worthless; much that has had its day; much that needs to be almost wholly re-imagined if it is to preserve any vitality. Who wants to deny this? For even the most gifted and intrepid of humanists, however, there are pesky doubts about the reversed demiurgic role we periodically feel called upon to play. If we cannot accept the positivistic assumption that those things which are systematically extruded or absent are therefore ontologically nil, what assumptions have we to guide our hand when we rule death for one element of our past and "intensive care" for another? We are accessories after the fact in any program of value-euthanasia. I do not feel impotent before this question. It is a question of the sort humanists, by reason of being humanists, find on their agenda.

Bluntly, humanists are people delegated to articulate and service an ecology of survival values. We tend to understand by this something more than the preservation of bodily existence. I take it this is what one of the greatest of all humanistic texts, *King Lear*, is largely about. For years I thought the stress in Lear's great, "Oh reason not the need," fell on "need." It falls rather on the outrage of "reason" presuming to measure human needs. The humanist's function is to *imagine* needs when these have been lost to self-bedazzling reason. Frankly, this mandate embarrasses me greatly. We (I) never seem to be wise enough. Our imaginations depend upon reason—the ability to test reality—for their ordinary integrity. And this practical necessity anesthetizes the more generous faculty it is meant to vivify. Being a humanist ain't no bed of roses.

One thing is clear; humanistic study has an irreducible diversity. The urge to program our mystery in the interests of amassing a cultural lobby clearly visible in its large smoothness is resistible. Our group will always lack class-discipline. There is something private about humanistic creativity. It is hard to see how humanists can ever constitute an "interest" without denaturing themselves. What I perceive as infecting our self-evaluating responses to the pressures of current student rhetoric is a flavor of shame. It is contradicted spasmodically, but we betray a sense of ex-

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hausted sanctions, of lapsed conviction, and above all—this is it at last—of ignorance, the baffled and shaming ignorance of gifted, serious men who have been somehow excluded from the definition of their own role. In among marvelous spasms of eloquence in these contemporary humanistic ruminations on "our crisis," and nibbling away at respected colleagues' poised self-descriptions, my inner ear picks up suppressed phrases: "Do you suppose if we did this, then . . ."; "Perhaps our students would approve of us if we . . ."; "Our social suasion would be increased if we . . ."; "One wonders if we have a right to ask that we be permitted to . . ."; "Is a humanist still a humanist when he begins to . . ."; etc., etc. I am not suggesting that the worm of self-doubt is alien to our consciences. Self-doubt is part of our attack. What bothers me is the failure to imagine the problem more specifically. Around a vague periphery there seem to be ranged various threats, faces, and factions who are unsympathetic, impatient, inclined to foreclosure, and capable of prescribing most of the terms of our defense. While closer around us here at the center of our group buzzes the disturbing notion that we should most definitely be doing *Something Else.* Let me repeat: I am not plumping for standing pat; I have never been very satisfied with most of what I do or what anyone else does in our fields. I am seeking a more trenchant formulation of what is supposed to be wrong. Here is a hypothesis.

Humanistic study is man-centered and laterally inferential. It is not easily frustrated by the egocentric predicament, or indeterminacy principles, or the many logics of subjective emotion. Its polarities are created by our human need to rely equally on candor *and* indirection, as we do on fusion *and* privacy. I worked my way through Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* some years ago. I brought away two things of special value. One does not concern us; the other was his definition of violence as "interiorized scarcity." I have been brooding on how this provides an analytical text for approaching our problem. Suppose we said that humanists, by self-assignment and *faute de mieux,* stand within our cultural typology as a group that seeks to restrict violence of one kind and increase "violence" of another kind through its trained capacities for isolating pertinent "scarcities" of the "interior." We believe that humanists can read symptoms of many different orders so as to infer not what is present—for who cannot see these things—but what is lacking. The humanities become then a responsive "science" of the specifically absent. This requires a different mode of self-utilization

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from a science that measures transactions between things present. The place where the "absent" resides is in the past and in the unconscious, supposing we want or need to divide these two categories.

Applied to the sweatier problems of the classroom, committee, or everyday cultivation of our role, this means we should start not with suppositions about what will expediently ease our troubled efforts, but with clearly formulated questions about what we would like to learn. Really substantial shifts in historical tempo or direction are most easily expressed by the way these shift our rôle from being a teacher to being a learner.

The real root of most humanists' disquietude nowadays is radically different from the ordinary troubles of our prior existence. We are now better paid, more openly honored, consulted with embarrassing hopefulness, and even occasionally subsidized as inquirers. By an amusing twist of cultural lag, we are being drafted to administer a large-scale public cathexsis to CULTURE at a point in history when we no longer believe in its redemptive potency. Our spiritual embarrassment comes from the inertial success of our rhetorical propaganda after our own skepticism has penetrated it.

It is not that we have nothing to teach. It is that—may I say it without imposing *hubris* upon us?—the most thoughtful humanists nowadays really would rather stop and learn something, find out what to teach now, than to carry on the psychocultural charade for which they are being drafted. I mean the ventriloqual transaction of cultifying the dense and beautiful texts, pictures, films, buildings, and objects we love and know as if these were systems, creeds, adaptable *weltanschauungen;* in short, as if they were answers to questions we ourselves still need to learn to ask.

Suppose we imagine a university of the sort we would like to attend just now. If universities have a justified role in times of genuine crisis, it is because they can address themselves to the means of "living" crisis *as well as* to the ends of "abolishing" it. I do not think all parts of this truly useful university should have the same I.Q. (that is, immediacy quotient). Some parts of the university should be as soberly analytic and detached as possible; other parts should be unabashedly activist. In between there should be many groups of people seeking to gain imaginative leverage on the problems feeding the crisis. I think most humanists fall in this middle sector. It is my conviction that the surfaces of things are

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seldom very interesting. It takes time to get at deeper issues; it takes even longer for imaginative acquisition of crucial insights. Projecting an ideal curriculum can help us identify what we need to learn according to our provisional ecology of survival values.

I earlier asserted that the "future" pertinent to humanists is different from that utilized by scientists. The only dogmatic remark I care to make in this conjectural essay is this: Humanists cannot work as humanists unless they have the courage to postulate a future long enough to permit inner incubation of the best experience they can present to their students. If we are not convinced there is time enough for this—and I am not ignorant of the arguments from apocalyptic urgency pressed by some of our most intelligent colleagues—then we should place our humanists' assumptions in escrow and enlist our general energies in more mechanical efforts to relieve the emergency. We should not deceive ourselves that psychic dehydration of the learning process is compatible with the nature of our work. I do not submit this as a debater's point. It is imaginable that we have reached a point of commanding urgency. I do not think so, but I should not be wholly surprised to be proved wrong by future events.

Meanwhile, my recommendation would be to build into our regular teaching structure courses and conferences of the sort which are presently extracurricular, thereby freeing them of expensive marginality and of their improvised and huggermugger aura. Why not have a curriculum which includes as a matter of course seminars in: *Cultural Diagnostics; The Sociology of Qualitative Concerns; The Ecology of Survival Values; The Future as a Psychic Category; The Poetics of Praxis; The Popular Arts; Psycho-Cultural Affiliations; The Psychology of the Fringe Life;* and *The Ethics of Imaginative Self-Preservation?* I can even imagine a rigorous laboratory course in *Varieties of Activism.* I see no reason why such a range of offerings should not be given along with courses in *Shakespeare, Analytical Philosophy, Genetics,* or *The Renaissance.* Let all be well taught and see what flourishes. There are many ways of being intelligent and many ways in which the imagination can be implicated. It is possible that humanists of our general breed are being "phased out" historically. We do not therefore have to emulate the beaver in medieval bestiaries who, when pursued, bit off his own stones and left them on a rock to appease his pursuer. The eminent critic of French literature, Roger Shattuck, recently asked a gathering of humanists who were pondering "the future

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of the humanities": "Are we the Establishment or the Underground?" A good question this, but I think the options are not yet so severe. Perhaps we humanists must keep on moving right down the middle where the trough of concern cuts deepest and where it is not easy to scramble onto the dry ground of either of these ideologically invested positions. Humanists nearly always find themselves in such an exposed situation. Humanism is a poetic not a philosophy.

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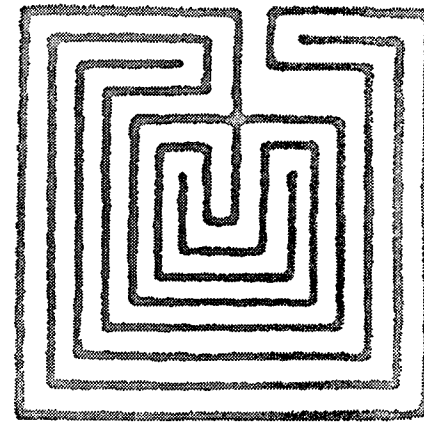

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Excerpts from Conference I

The conference participants agreed early in the meeting to break into four groups. One was commissioned to study the theme of relevance; another discussed curriculum and teaching; two others met to debate the goals and the nature of the humanities. The transcript that follows begins with the abbreviated accounts given by each of the group chairmen to the plenary session.

MARX

We accepted the label, taking as our springboard the first question under relevance. How far and in what way should present social and political problems and tastes in the arts guide the choice and interpretation of subject matter? I found that our group was extraordinarily lacking in contentiousness. Perhaps that was unfortunate in the sense that we did feel—I particularly—the absence of the voice of the great majority of our colleagues in the humanities and universities today, most of whom would have disagreed with what we were saying. The cards were stacked in favor of a radical view.

Someone pointed out in the beginning that the question of relevance is inherent in the humanities. The subject matter of the humanities in every era has raised virtually universal questions: How shall we live? What is important? Yet despite the universality of these questions of value, there are certain distinctive characteristics of the present era—specifically, a calling into question of what one of our group described as "the liberal optimistic humanitarian assumptions behind the modern university." These assumptions were finally defined as the belief (1) that the continuing pursuit of knowledge, along the lines established, would somehow lead to new patterns of meaning and coherence, and eventuate in something worthwhile; (2) that the pursuit of knowledge is inherently good; and (3) that the distinctive mark of our own era is skepticism about the possibility of order and unity.

We concluded that there is a similarity between the attitudes which animate the disaffection of our more vigorously dissenting students and the implications of literary and aesthetic modernism. Our students today, so far as one can define the point of view behind their world-view, seem to take for granted a world of randomness, multiplicity, promiscuity, chance, even meaninglessness. This is not necessarily a result of exposure to the rather respectable

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body of such ideas that has been produced since the middle of the nineteenth century. The students seem to have acquired this view more or less through direct experience. We characterized the disaffected students of today as one might characterize a good reader of *The Education of Henry Adams*—someone who came out with the Adams' world-view.

We therefore rephrased the issue of relevance to focus upon the degree to which we, as scholars and teachers, are prepared to submit to this sense of a multiple, fragmented reality which resists virtually all traditional modes of imparting order and meaning to our subject. How far are we willing to go in abandoning the traditional categories—academic, historical, modal—of organizing our subject matter and opening ourselves to the students' conception of the modern world? (Here we are thinking about our most inventive, audacious, and radical students.)

There seemed to be no debate in the group about the need to institute an open latitudinarian policy. We assumed, for one thing, that it would inevitably be met by resistance from the more conservative members of the profession and by their reaffirmation of traditional modes of learning and scholarship. It was felt that the burden of proof should be upon the traditionalists. They must be responsible for validating the traditional modes of teaching in the humanities. If, however, we accept the hypothesis of the radical students—that rationality, learning, the university itself, have been placed in the service of a lower (or higher?) *irrationality*—we may find that some of our colleagues are willing to relinquish entirely their commitment to the idea of the indispensability of the rational intelligence. This fear was expressed only by a minority in our group, and I was one of that minority. I sense a willingness to swing further with the antirationalism of the radicals than I am willing to go. The danger here, as I see it, is in confusing the habit of mind (that is, the exercise of rational intelligence) with the corruption of certain institutions with which we identify that habit.

With these rather far-ranging speculations in view, we then turned to possible spheres of reform. We divided our discussion in three parts and talked about the ways in which professional training, undergraduate curricula, and graduate education might be made more "relevant." As far as undergraduate curricula are concerned, there was a strong disposition to abandon the conventional divisions, to abandon commitments to covering subject matter and sequential arrangements of study, to build courses around problem areas. Courses for freshmen taught by seniors in a particular field and greater flexibility in teaching style which would allow more room for the unexpected and the immediate to enter the classroom were two of the more popular suggestions.

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Turning to graduate education, there was universal agreement on the need somehow to cut a head or two from the Ph.D. monster. It was suggested that Ph.D. candidates be encouraged to choose problems of contemporary importance as a starting point. We felt that this conference should deal with the whole problem of creating an attitude toward publication which might eliminate a large percentage of what passes for scholarship in contemporary education.

Under the rubric of our professional concern, which cuts across the other two categories as well, there was a strong disposition to encourage the mingling of practitioners in the arts with scholars—to expose musicologists to composers, art historians to painters, literary historians to poets. It was pointed out, however, that more of this is now done in this country than on the Continent.

In conclusion I should say that we did not conceive of relevance as topical; we agreed that relevance is the capacity of the scholar and the teacher to bring his deepest human convictions into his work. In the classroom, it means that he does not go through the class session as if he were rehearsing the same dance step that his teachers in graduate school used. Rather, he is aware, even if he does not always make it explicit, that his subject impinges upon his view of the world he inhabits. He conveys his sense that the method he expounds matters, that it bears upon the way in which he makes choices. We concluded with the notion that relevance in the humanities always comes back to the idea of the freedom of human beings to assert themselves in making choices. If in his teaching and research a man can know that he prefers X to Y and that this choice is a reflex of his most carefully considered and deeply felt sense of his subject, he will inevitably make his subject relevant.

MUSCATINE

Our discussion started with a piquantly concrete proposal by Mr. Shattuck, and the entire afternoon was spent eight against one trying to persuade him of various things. His first suggestion was most fruitful and in a way sounded a note that lasted throughout the afternoon. After his conventional pitch for conviction about what we should be doing and how to make that relevant to students, he asked why more attention is not paid in the curriculum to the role of the body and the voice in the process of living.

After some skirmishing about just what physical culture should have to do with education and teaching, we arrived at the notion that this idea was piquant in part because it symbolized our feeling that what is learned needs to be reintegrated into the complex, round, whole psychophysical thing that life is. It is as if we were seeking our way back from dissociation to reconnect the idea and

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the reality, the emotion and the act. Other people suggested that one of the great agencies in teaching is trying to create in the student a feeling of competence, of "is-ness," which physical activity is in a sense. It is also a symbol of the roundness and depth of existence that we are trying to build back into the curriculum. All of us agreed that the curriculum should try to reunite mind and matter, motion and act, idea and reality into coherent relationship.

We then discussed how and from what direction the curriculum should be reformed. Mr. Arrowsmith introduced a national, if not global, solution to our problem, by suggesting that nothing short of a super league of colleges and universities would be necessary in order to break the logjam. Others felt that the logjam had more likely points of weakness. Most of us agreed that among the high school, which is now suffering the effects of poor curricula, the college, and the graduate school, the college is probably the best place to look for the beginning of humanistic reform. The idea is that the college, Janus-like, looks both ways. If we convert the college, we might be able to convert the other two systems more easily. The student body, being more restless in college, might play into our hands more readily, and thus the college as an institution might actually be the most flexible of the three.

We turned again to the question of our curriculum and spent a good deal of time talking about the curriculum in relationship to modern circuitry. Our opinions differed significantly on this subject. We ranged from the question of the actual application of circuitry to education itself (for example, teaching machines) to the very general question of the relationship between the humanist and the technological society. Here I can report a range between George Morgan's ginger and rather apprehensive view of these machines (and his notion that you do not need to run a computer in order to understand how bad it is) to the optimistic notion of Eric Martin, Bill Arrowsmith, and myself that we ought to get aboard these machines and see how well they can be made to work. The technologists producing them are still in a mood to take direction as to how they can be used. Many of us feel that these people have a childish desire to be told how to use them; that the option will not last forever; and that if we do not tell them, they are going to fumble to non-solutions of their own from which we will suffer in the long run. A small majority of us feels that a new curriculum should not only embrace the possibilities of technology in teaching, but go very deeply into the phenomena of the technological society: new forms of communication, a student body which studies with the television set on, and any number of unknown new gadgets being developed. At this point, all agreed that our discussions of the curriculum had been riveted on the present.

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We have decided, I think unanimously, that our point of departure must be the present as context for the curriculum. We then asked: What about the past? Very quickly we agreed that it was impossible to dispose of the past and that history would have to be used. It will have to be asked a new set of questions, however. One of the great tasks before humanity is to re-write history, to rewrite the value scale of literature perhaps, to re-write the history of civilization in terms of the present. Euripides yes, Plato yes, Chaucer yes; but what questions do you ask, what questions do you answer with these texts? We all agreed that the old notion that all history is equally relevant has to be thrown out. *Wissenschaft* per se is too expansive for our plight, and we have to pay more attention to the relative cogency and importance of different bodies of knowledge and of different questions.

Then we got onto the subject of the special qualifications required for teaching this curriculum. This involves graduate work and professional qualifications. Here we retreated, to a certain extent, into humanistic optimism. We agreed that teachers of the humanities have a particular responsibility *to be,* that there is a circular connection between our desire to see the students led by education into a reintegration of thought, feeling, and action and our ability to exhibit, at least in part, this *very* quality of the integration of self. Mr. Arrowsmith called it knowledge with a conscience; Mr. Morgan said we want a man who by his very mode of existence is capable of engaging students; someone else said we want a man who is capable of responding to the student as a total being. We then asked ourselves whether there were further qualifications. We agreed that science teaching should have the same requirement, but it was felt by some that the scientist who is not a whole man is not quite so untrue to his discipline as the humanist who is not a whole man, since his discipline does not pretend to the same kind of wholeness. We asked ourselves whether we still wanted the Ph.D., and there I must say that our conversation is still in progress.

ACKERMAN

The Goals Committee came to less focus than some of the other groups. Our frustration arose because we felt there was no clear definition of the humanities; thus, the goals of the humanities became difficult to discuss. Our problem was essentially whether we must look on our mission as if we were in crisis. The other committees have reported a somewhat similar emphasis. The second issue was how one faces the definition of goals without a clear teleology. We admitted that we are not religious nor Marxist, and

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that we are supposed to formulate a system admitting our diversity.

The first committee talked of directing their attention to the current student culture; we talked in rather more global terms of the many aspects of contemporary culture that humanists do not touch or represent: Oriental and other societies that are seldom embraced and seldom contribute students to the humanities in this country; the poor; all aspects of our society that we neither cover nor represent and that are not represented in this group.

We agreed to address only one segment—the hypothesis that our tradition has been elitist, an attitude which not only turns off the student, but reaches a very small segment of society. We talked about the conflict in America between the education of an elite and the melting-pot principle. The elitist educational system and the melting pot are two different concepts. We have no philosophy that brings them together, and so we considered what we should preserve from the tradition while at the same time creating a new kind of diversity. We were not asking what is the result of embracing student attitudes. We were asking how can we do anything but fragment ourselves and lose the expertise which our tradition gives us if we attempt in some way to write a history of the anonymous man, to embrace what George Steiner calls "the invisible" around us? That became a major problem. We might, perhaps, preserve a core in our technique and from this core reach out to the many things in the world around us that have been previously invisible.

We granted that we have no over-all system within which to work, that we are not articulating a particular view, and that our philosophy can be only one of keeping open the lines of contact. We have various views, and these views have to be tested by trying them on an ever-expanding system. We need, above all, systems of feedback so that we are not only delivering, but receiving. How do we receive from the invisible and the anonymous as well as the students who belong to our tradition? How can we learn to listen? These issues were not offered as definable goals of the humanities, but rather as the goals of humane thought and action. We considered the humanities to be anything that is humane in its nature. Mr. Steiner emphasized that the direction of the humanities must be toward the social and political arena in order to stop a recurrence of past horrors. Other members were perhaps not so exclusively directed toward social and political concentration as he, because they felt that experiences other than those which can be defined as social and political can help in social and political realms.

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ANDERSON

I put the melting pot into the discussion in a different way than Jim Ackerman has given it back. Much of our social ethos has been built on the idea of the melting pot. This was operative in the civil rights movement until a few years ago. Liberal young people went to the South to aid in bringing the Negro into the great American middle-class white society. In the last years, under the impact of the black power movement, the riots, and Vietnam, we have increasingly generated a number of groups in this society who do not want to be identified with white middle-class liberal society. These groups do not want to be integrated as nondescript equals, but to achieve power while remaining distinctive within the society.

Attitudes, ideas, and institutions must be developed that, rather than trying to make everyone the same, acknowledge the existence of distinctly characterized groups within society. Is not one goal of the humanities to provide a new ethos, a new system of ideas, a philosophy that teaches Americans to conceive of people as different and welcome this diversity?

OHMANN

We began with solidarity about some historical notions and ended up in a state of disarray. We started by asking what seemed to be the nature of the humanities in the past. We talked first about the ancient notion of the liberal arts as those studies appropriate to a free man and then moved rather hastily to a discussion of the humanities in the Renaissance. Marshall Cohen suggested that in some later period, perhaps in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the humanities came to be almost co-extensive with the arts and the study of the arts. We then discussed the nature of the humanities now, beginning with Mr. White's idea that the humanities are the study of the human phenomenon—of man as a whole or of men variously in all of their activities. Mr. Whitman suggested that science, medicine, and law might very well come under this rubric, as they had in Greece. We then had a lengthy discussion on the distinction between science and the humanities. Mr. Mayr suggested that at present people within the humanities are prone to ignore the humane content of the sciences and their contribution to our conception of man. This was undisputed.

What does it mean to say that the humanities are the study of the human phenomenon? Does it mean that we are trying to reach agreement about general theories of man, to discover the ideal of man? Perhaps it means simply that we are considering the diversity and the various achievements of men, and that we should abolish the term "Man" with a capital "M" altogether.

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We also talked about the nature of the humanities in relation to truth. It seemed to me, to Mr. Steinberg, and to some others that one might begin defining the humanities by saying that they are studies in which the pursuit of truth in its strict sense is less important than other things—such as loving acquaintance with our subject matter, appreciation of it, insight into it. Other members felt that the humanities were the celebration of individuality and the encouragement of the development of individual human beings. At this point, Mr. Douglas suggested that if one accepted that definition, one might describe the humanities by talking about their liberalizing function in society. Mr. Douglas asked for criteria of what is and what is not humanistic study.

We talked about the functions of the humanities and what the humanities might contribute, but we were unable to get to the heart of these questions. Arguments for the humanities can range anywhere from their social utility, at one extreme, to private taste, at the other.

Mr. Steinberg stressed that humanistic education involves essentially the excitement of discovery and insight which takes place within a conceptual structure. Others thought that the humanities concern, more essentially, the actual immediate experience of the arts or a sense of the past.

We discussed the contribution the humanities might make to such things as peace and ordered society. Some argued that the humanities emerged at their best in times of social disorder, when society was anything but healthy.

Marshall Cohen argued that although the humanities or perhaps the liberal arts were a coherent and principled group of enterprises at various times in the past, the concept of the humanities was not particularly useful today. He contended that it is fruitless to look for the defining criterion of the humanities or even for a set of defining criteria. This seemed a fitting place to conclude our talk.

ACKERMAN

Everyone came to this conference prepared to abandon the uninvolved scholarship of the learned journals, to change—if necessary—to a more committed point of view and to affirm the communal interest in human values, in the need for relevance, in teaching and writing. We were already convinced that the future of the humanities involved more stress on meaning. For that reason, many of the papers discussed unspecified "values" with the assumption that we all would agree that they were crucial to our discussion.

When we began to talk about problems, the outside world

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pressed on us more than we had expected. Those problems that were in the background in the papers came into the foreground in the discussions. Undoubtedly, this group, more than any gathering of humanists heretofore, began to talk about coming to terms with crisis. The student revolution, war, poverty, and the machine—all entered our discussions in the small groups and began to seem much more important at our subsequent meeting than the "values" that had been at issue at the start. As a company we came to grips with a different sort of focus than before.

This changed the whole direction in which we had been going, which is largely responsible for the diffusion that came out in the group reports. The problems tended to produce a polarity: Those people primarily concerned with political and social involvement demand a radical change of posture in the humanist and alteration of existing institutions; others wish to preserve the past role of the humanist with the understanding that humanistic thinking would be brought to bear on the present condition of man, with greater sympathy for the world around, with greater understanding of the student and the society, but essentially within the framework of existing institutions and academic points of view. This is the real opposition among us, and our primary aim should not be its reconciliation.

The concern for "values" disappeared because the pressures that were brought out tested these values, and they proved to be internal and, thus, inoperative in answering many of our questions. This diffusion has given us a new framework, and we must now define our position in relation to the polarity that has developed.

COHEN

I am not certain that I fully understand the intentions of those who express themselves in the most urgent social and political terms. Obviously, many studies and many scholars are conspicuously relevant to the urgent social issues confronting us all. But it is not obvious to me that all legitimate scholarly enterprises have this kind of relevance, and I wonder whether those who are most critical of present tendencies would make clear in more concrete terms than they have so far done precisely what kinds of changes they wish to promote. What is it that they think universities ought to do that they are not now doing, and do they think that universities are the most appropriate institutions for undertaking these tasks? What, in particular, do they have in mind for humanists? My general social and political attitudes are in sympathy with those on the left. But I do not see how one can reasonably endorse the suggestions now being made unless they are specified in far more concrete proposals.

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MUSCATINE

We have been used to rewriting history, and our main job as humanists *is* to rewrite for each generation the history of culture. Our generation has perhaps not rewritten it fast enough; we have tried to get our students to be like us. An effective humanities Establishment should have built into it the flexibility that would enable young scholars to do things differently than their masters. Such a mechanism would provide society with the means to adjust to continuous change. Some of us consider this time-lag more acute than others do. We feel we need to make one radical leap to catch up to the generation we are teaching. In some way, we must also build into our enterprise a mechanism for keeping up. This does not mean that each of us must change his entire equipment every few years, but it may mean that each year our students must be allowed to go at things their way, not ours. Thus, I do not see this division as being deeply philosophical. It is, rather, an awareness of how far we are behind.

ARROWSMITH

My sense of the impotence of the humanities is based upon the conviction that society, in ways that we do not like, is actually educating the majority. The humanist is no longer in the business of education. He will not get back into it unless he manages to have a real impact on the forces—technological, commercial, and mass cultural—that are, in fact, educating the majority of his students.

Only recently have we done anything about the incredible state of humanistic education in secondary schools. The scientists were far ahead of the humanists; they had some conscience about the chaos that the unmediated use of their knowledge would create. Humanists have not been sure of what humanistic knowledge creates. I suppose it was difficult for humanists ever to have a conscience. So, this is a very complex problem. I do not see how the university can claim to care about man or care about the educational enterprise unless the humanists use their incredibly unused resources, both human and financial, to correct what is out of whack. The environment, the ecology, is against us. We must change it.

STEINER

It comes down to cases and to concrete proposals. There is no other honest answer to Marshall Cohen. In my own case, I am only qualified to suggest changes in one domain. There are three very fundamental proposals for the kind of discipline which *might*,

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in its own way, speak to some of our needs and difficulties as at certain times, say a hundred years ago in England, the Classics spoke to a certain condition and its needs.

I should think that one would have to insist on the study of one major language outside the Western park. There are those who would urge one rather than another, and it is for the experts to say. If one follows Benjamin Lee Wholf's argument—one of the most important, I think, ever put to any humanist—such a language would bring with it conventions of behavior, of kinship patterns, of sexual ideas different from what we otherwise assume to be the norm. The person who has learned one major Oriental or African language is a somewhat different human being. He can never again afford certain confident parochialisms.

Second, I am not persuaded by many dreams of a combination of scientific and literary training. It is possible, however, to take one to two major problems in the history of mathematics or science and see how they live inside the culture and the literature. I was privileged to teach a course of this kind at Stanford. One could take the grouping—Galileo, Pascal, Fermat—and trace the history of their influence on the relevant culture. No man doing a *litterae humaniores* degree should be immune from seeing mathematics—that other great language—at work next to his principal *lingua franca.* In the French *lycée* we were not allowed to opt for letters until we had enough mathematics. It is absurd to think that one can do very much today without calculus and the habits which it demands.

The third point is the most difficult. In our study of literature, the verbal structure has been separated from the content. Mr. Kirchner has mentioned certain inanities, or stupidities, that one cannot do in a nonverbal field which requires the use of one's body and hands. Can one find exercises, ways of teaching literature and language, which reveal the complete physical meaning inside each sentence? I give a small example which is not intentionally macabre. In an extraordinary book produced by the Stanford University Press some years ago on the siege of Leningrad, the author printed the week-to-week tables of how many ounces of meat or bread were distributed, and how they were progressively reduced. Over a million died of starvation in the winter '42-'43. I kept reading this, and I realized that I could not visualize how much the amounts would weigh. I had not been taught to ask how much a certain amount would weigh in my hand, or what size it would be on the table. For years I had been in a philological context rather than in one of meaning. Are there exercises we could learn for ourselves and for our students which might recover some of the human immediacies of the texts we study?

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MORGAN

We must develop new conceptions of scholarship and of teaching that will constantly keep in mind the innumerable demands upon human existence and the need for acknowledging that some things are far more important to learn than others. Our learning and teaching have to be carried out in the total context of our actual existence.

Let me illustrate what I mean by an example from my own teaching. In one of my courses, I address myself to the conflicts that we face in the modern world in connection with different interpretations of human nature, especially as a result of the growth of physiology, anthropology, psychology, and so forth. Such a study engages the students in vital and basic problems. Most people have absorbed from their culture all kinds of presuppositions—such as dominant concepts and ways of questioning and thinking—that bear on their notions of morality, meaning, destiny, and so on. To understand these presuppositions and become aware of alternatives to them is an essential and urgent task of study and teaching in our time.

PREDMORE

The chief danger is specialization. We ought to address ourselves to this problem. Graduate education is going to be increasingly dangerous unless we find a way to conduct it with a constant alertness for possible consequences and relationships that go beyond the specialty. The scholar *has* to be willing to look beyond his own little garden.

STEINER

Today's priorities should demand the opening of one large window away from our central culture which would suggest our peninsular position. Within our culture, we must realize the consequences of remaining separated from the great nonverbal language—mathematics. That separation is an artifice; it was never part of the great humanistic tradition. We must make—so far as we can—our love of our subject, our delight in it, something a little disagreeable by rubbing our noses very often in the meaning of what we are conveying or are asking of others. I suggest that one might make a course on Kafka or Kierkegaard or whomever a political act. I deeply see the position of those who have asked why this has become so. Nevertheless, it *has*, and although it may not last forever, right now we must make our sense and our conveyance of what we love best (particularly because we love it best) very, very vulnerable.

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MARX

The left wing, so far as I understand its position on this subject, begins with a political premise about the unacceptability of teaching the humanities in the conventional way in a society which seems to be getting less conducive to humane learning. There is a general notion here that America is rapidly drifting toward an authoritarian, militaristic, and racist society, and that this increasingly repressive society will, nevertheless, be perfectly capable of tolerating humanists as we now constitute ourselves.

One can reach out in two quite different directions for ways of resisting this possibility. One is to meet the issue frontally. Mr. Arrowsmith and Mr. Steiner (in his first and perhaps his second recommendation) have suggested programs for meeting this attack at a rather high level of abstraction—for facing the issue institutionally in large political terms. Mr. Martin and some others represent what might be called a disintegrated approach; they wish to break what we do in the humanities into the atomic particles of our experiential relationship to a subject. Along similar lines, George Steiner's third recommendation implies that if we can only teach a student once in his life to respond fully to a film, a poem, an object, we can hope to change him so that he will no longer tolerate much of the *kitsch* that is handed out. This is the old hope that the humanities can remake the man. The distinction I am trying to make is between talking directly about the relation of the humanities to the social order—in largely abstract "sociological language"—and talking about highly selected, particular, intensive experiences with, say, art, music, or literature. These are two quite different, perhaps antithetical, strategies. Which of these two is the "left" (as Marshall Cohen defines it)? Are they mutually exclusive? Do we choose between them, or can they be followed simultaneously?

STEINBERG

Questions have been asked here as though we were a political party convention hammering out a platform for an election campaign. Yet I am glad to think that we will probably disband without subscribing to any joint policy. We would not be humanists if we could commit ourselves to a concerted program of action.

George Steiner made three "concrete" proposals, but I am more impressed by his nerve in putting them forth than by what they promise. His first proposal is that we "insist on the study of one major language outside the Western park." He tells us, "the person who has learned one major Oriental or African is a different human being. He can never again afford certain confident parochialisms. . . . Today's priorities should demand the opening of one large window away from our central culture."

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I agree with Mr. Steiner only to the extent that I think it would be wonderful to know Swahili or Hindi. But I doubt that the institutionalizing of a required non-Western language is, in terms of priorities, an answer to any of our problems. I recently sat on a committee for the study of non-Western curricular changes at Hunter College in New York; our whole group agreed that an understanding of non-Western cultures was desirable—in us as well as in our students. But the real question was always: "What do we cut out to accommodate the new program? English, French, art, European history?" No curricular proposal is really "concrete" unless it tells us what traditional discipline is to be sacrificed.

Secondly, I am surprised at Mr. Steiner's confidence that a successful non-Western language course will produce a change in the human being. It seems to me that the acquiring of Chinese, for instances, is as likely as not to make better CIA agents for the United States administration. And everyone knows that you can study the quaint ways of foreigners and be wholly confirmed in the conviction of your own cultural superiority. Among the most effective perpetrators of Western colonialism were some of the best students of colonial languages.

But my graver quarrel is with Mr. Steiner's two metaphors. His "Western park" and his "opening window" imply that we inhabit our own culture like a cozy enclosure which shuts out the reality of the wide world. Now obviously all human vision is partial, but the window metaphor is deceptive if it suggests that the panorama of Asia and Africa is what we need to cure us of provincialism and prejudice. In my own teaching experience, for instance, I keep discovering that the culture of which my students are invincibly ignorant is Christianity. Whenever, in connection with an art historical problem, we investigate what a given Catholic or Orthodox dogma asserts, how it came to be formulated and what it was that Western men were actually required to believe for their salvation, my students are stunned by the sheer onslaught of novelty. To most of my students, irrespective of their family backgrounds, nothing nowadays seems more recondite than the theological doctrines and the legends and practices that have occupied Western minds and shaped Western destinies. Revealing this aspect of our own past, we expose a host of things that still operate on us, or against us, on levels of thought, feeling, and prejudice. Let me give an example.

Any course involving the Florentine Renaissance is bound to mention Savonarola. Some of us who teach in this area develop a habit of reading his sermons, and this is the sort of thing we may come across [in the sermon *Dello Amore di Jesu Christo,* 1492]. Before a rapt audience—a woodcut representation of it comes with

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the text—Savonarola describes the Passion of Christ. He describes it in vivid detail and, at a powerful rhetorical climax, cries out against the cruelty of the Jews: "And with a cruel crown they have crowned him; pierced all his head; all beaten and bleeding." Then, as his vicarious agony becomes unendurable, the preacher exclaims: "Oh, impious Jews, Oh cruel synagogue, will you never leave beating my sweet spouse." [*"Anzi lhano duna corona crudele coronato; perforato tutto il capo; percosso & tutto sanguinato"; " O impii Giudei. O synagoga crudele non sarai tu mai satia di percuòtere il mio dolce sposo!"*]

What I find remarkable here is not simply the transposition of the historic Passion into a dramatic present, but that this dramatization is the heart of the preacher's faith. If Christ is perpetually sacrified, if the test of faith is to believe in his real presence in the daily sacrifice of the Mass, then the whole Passion, including the cruelty of his persecutors, is a present fact also. Thus the very faith of the preacher in the continued renewal of Christ's sacrifice moves him to cry out against those who do not cease even now from tormenting his Savior. Now try to imagine a Jewish boy in fifteenth-century Florence: If he pleads innocent of the guilt with which Christian faith is investing him, would he not—by denying his complicity in the flagellation of Christ—seem to deny the perpetual reality of the Passion, thereby heaping blasphemy upon deicide and compounding his guilt?

Such mythical patterns of thought seem to most of my students to be as far out and exotic as anything from Tibet. Yet they are constituent features of our own "Western park." To discover them can be a trip as remote, shocking, and dangerous as is the terrible self-discovery of America in which we are now engaged thanks to the black revolution; or the discovery—to be made next door—of the vast world of poverty. In other words, those windows that give the most sensational views seem always to open inward.

BLAU

In our relationship to our students or our colleagues, we often say: "Abandon your preconceptions." It is, however, very difficult for us to abandon our preconceptions. When we think programmatically about the future of the humanities, as Mr. Steiner did, the program is directly related to our own history.

The big issue we have not confronted is the particular character of the humanities that always puts the burden of proof on us. I am not at all convinced that the learning of any language is yet fully substantiated as a necessity in a humanities curriculum. This does not mean, however, that I am opposed to learning Hindi, Swahili,

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or any Oriental or European language. The acquisition of language has not prevented those barbarities in Western history that I know Mr. Steiner opposes, as does everyone else in this room. The same logic holds true, of course, for mathematics or any other subject.

Implicit in the works we revere most in twentieth-century lore and literature is the idea that our tradition may be bankrupt. Still, we are thinking within that system, perhaps we are locked into it. Every age has looked upon human experience as essentially mysterious, and every age has had a different attitude toward the nature of that mystery. When we had a sacramental dispensation which somehow gave order and form and ultimate consequence to that mystery, I suppose people suffered their anxieties in another way. The apocalyptic instinct operating around this table can in no way be discredited. We are all aware of the possibility of extermination. The real existential datum of any of our present discussions is that tomorrow the apocalypse *can* be here. If that is not true, we have propagated an even greater lie than many of the public lies that have been perpetrated upon us.

I know by instinct that George Steiner's proposal for the teaching of language is an unjustified proposal, and I am unsympathetic to it. I cannot honestly believe that it is adequate to approach this problem through a program which says you have to teach students to respond to Oriental culture by engaging them in a mode of feeling and thought associated with another language. We have ample precedent that many people who participated in the immense barbarities of the twentieth century had mastered other languages and other modes of thought and feeling.

WHITE

I am surprised how little sentiment there is around this table for simply going ahead and doing the old things better. The sentiment is overwhelmingly to expand the octave in which we sing our humanistic song. I agree with George Steiner's proposals, but I consider them unenforceable. It is not *possible* to compel free students. If you want demonstrations, just require Japanese or Ewe. The implementation of the things Mr. Steiner has proposed may be self-defeating. We have to ponder ways of getting realism as opposed to the verbalism which has been traditional in humanism. Years ago I proposed a humanities course on the internal-combustion engine. I am confident that this would be as enriching, if properly done, as a course on Shakespeare. Naturally, spines tingle when you say a thing like that, but an internal-combustion engine, properly and historically viewed, is an extraordinary manifestation of the human spirit. Nobody believes this, but people are increas-

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ingly interested in the internal-combustion engine as it becomes obsolete and an incubus on our society.

COHEN

I fear that my challenge to the critics has been interpreted as a general endorsement of the *status quo*. In fact, I am very far from being content with the present state of the humanities. As a philosopher I have a deep objection to most humanistic education in this country. The official "humanists" do not seem to be very concerned with developing the philosophic virtues, and many of them openly despise philosophy. Of course, they say that what they despise is only the present state of philosophy. But I think they are very much like the critics of contemporary poetry. What all too many of them despise are philosophy and poetry themselves.

In general, I find a distressing lack of skill at abstract reasoning and the formulation of precise theses among present-day humanists. This is one reason why the distinction between the humanities and the sciences or between the arts and the sciences is so appealing to them. It is reflected in the excessive emphasis on the concrete, the individual, and the subjective in our discussions. I do not accept the accounts of art that explicate its nature in these terms, and I think it extremely important, in any case, to resist the identification of the humanities with the arts themselves. This is not a traditional identification, and it ought to be resisted today.

Many of us are not happy with the present development of our disciplines or with our own contributions to them. To some extent this is a necessary condition, and we ought not to pretend that it is only a temporary circumstance. Great minds are always in limited supply, and many will never rise far above the level of intelligent and sensitive custodianship. But this is a valuable activity and one that is especially important in the humanities. No doubt certain of the humanistic activities are at the present time undergoing a more exciting development than others. But all of the major disciplines are the repository of important skills and patiently acquired knowledge. It would be irrational to abandon them. In their best development all of the traditional humane studies display vitality and importance. Many of the skills and types of knowledge are so different, however, that it is possible to question the utility of the concept of the humanities.

My convictions about the "relevance" of the humanities are complicated. I am myself interested in law and in political philosophy among other things. It is therefore a simple thing for me to write and to teach about so pressing a subject as "civil disobedience." I can employ whatever professional skills I possess and be

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politically "relevant" with no difficulty at all. This is obviously true of those who teach about problems of foreign policy or urban politics as well. At the same time I have the greatest sympathy for Mr. White's attitudes. If we demand this kind of relevance, what becomes of the Chaucer scholar, the philosopher who is interested not in justice but in sense perception, the art historian investigating the origins of the Gothic cathedral? It would be an act of barbarism, not a way of advancing our civilized purposes, to abandon these activities or to intimidate these scholars. We must realize that some of our activities and occupations are more directly relevant to moral and political problems than are others. And some may be relevant in only the remotest way if they are relevant at all. We cannot allow the total politicization of the universities. Among other things, it would be bad politics.

ARROWSMITH

I should like to protest Mr. Steinberg's belief that this conference does not need an agenda or priorities, because its nature is apparently to syllogize the invidious verities. The time has come for action. Every humanist must decide whether he wants to go on with a watered-down elitist tradition or whether he wants to choose the precarious project of vulgarization.

Since our institutions have become institutions of universal higher education, we are necessarily committed to vulgarization; if we are not, we ought to put our time and energy into fighting the tendency toward universal higher education. We ought to take a risk that our whole culture has never taken—the risk of intelligent, imaginative vulgarization. We ought to make a deliberate attempt to put the humanities across, to make them visible and viable in a democratic culture.

STEINER

I seem to hear a Marxist voice laughing. If we cannot agree with them, at least they have a right to say: "You are talking about things we have long recognized to be central, things to which we have given our lives. If you think we are doing them badly or falsely, do them better." All the things that are coming up here would in a large part of the globe be the oldest hat, the most hackneyed clichés. We have paid eloquent tribute to an absence. How many of the things we are bringing up belong to that other world?

If I understand Mr. Steinberg's weary and accepting insight, we should have known all along that human beings were split—that you could read Goethe and do battle for Hitler, play Bee-

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thoven and run a concentration camp, that it was naïve to believe with Matthew Arnold that a great humanistic reading, love of art and music would make certain things impossible. If this was wrong, we now know it. I merely reserve the right to say that this is a ghastly new knowledge. One cannot just say: "You should have known it all along." Men far wiser than we did not know it, hoped against it, and certainly organized their lives accordingly. If we now find ourselves in this situation, the cliché "sadder and wiser" has never been so strong. If we now must proceed without the Arnoldian hope for an effective civilization from the humanities, then it becomes the more urgent for us to answer the Marxist case and the other cases missing here. Precisely because we now have this knowledge, it is no longer possible to echo Mr. Steinberg's picture of the deeply divided mentality. That picture throws a most radical light on the hope of human unity which was the hope of the classic humanities. If that is gone, ought we not to pick up the pieces? I am asking for a *praxis*—a Marxist word—a methodology for doing this.

HOLT

My suspicion about Germany is that there was an enormous gulf between what they read and what they listened to and how they actually dealt with one another as human beings. I suspect this same enormous gulf exists in our culture. The humanities have become increasingly a little bunch of things that in certain contexts we talk about because it makes us feel good to do so. Meanwhile we go on dealing with one another in a very different sort of way. This gulf is dreadful; we should point it out and try to do something about closing it. I cannot help but feel that somebody who met Goethe in the spirit in which Goethe wanted to be met would not be a guard in a concentration camp.

BLAU

I am not too clear about the connection between the observations Mr. Steiner just made, with which I agree thoroughly, and certain aspects of the program he previously advanced. How are the two connected?

STEINER

This is a most difficult question. Because I am unable to accept the Marxist eschatology in which theory and *praxis* come together, I am trying to see whether we can build outside such an eschatology some identifications with politics, the other world, and other aspects

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of civilization. Can we achieve something of their constant reference to the concrete, to immediacy? It is far more difficult to do outside, but I know their system has led to unacceptable tyrannies in the cause of unity. Nevertheless, its absence here today is extremely grave because it means we are cutting ourselves off from things they can bring. They do represent one of the great lineages of human hope. If we think the hope went wrong, there is still much in that lineage, and some of our vocabulary would benefit by the stringent ironies of their questions. I am of course only a heretic trying to find a way to concrete possibilities.

MUSCATINE

I should like to observe that the push toward *praxis* may be an instance where the Marxist ideology falls in with an even larger cultural movement which we are still experiencing and which makes all the impulse toward *praxis*, toward feeling, much more than a fear of the abstract. It is related to the present and derives from a critique of the whole direction of the culture—the impersonality, the distance, and the deadening of response that is created by the interposition of machinery between people. We eat a piece of bread in the morning in Newton, and we pay for it by electronic means in California a month later. Our feet are no longer in the soil. Our hands no longer touch. We no longer feel one another in profound ways. Surely the interest in the body that Roger Shattuck expressed and in the concrete that has been discussed here is a result of a profound critique of the whole civilization. It is necessary whether we have a para-Marxist or any other ideology. It is not merely a matter of taste or temperament.

WHITE

May I say that our colleague Charles Muscatine is romanticizing the soil. I see nothing inhuman or inhumane about eating a piece of toast down at the Charter House and paying for it with a credit card in California. This is purely a useful mechanism. There is nothing wrong with my telephoning my wife in California since I cannot speak to her face to face. Indeed, it adds to humanization to talk to one's wife in California from Massachusetts. It is permissible to walk, but it is not more human to walk than to ride in machines made by humans. This is the old agrarian romanticism, and it is one of the very deep fixations of traditional humanism. We should get out of these antique fixations and look at ourselves as human beings, recognizing that all facilities are double-edged. Language, the greatest of inventions, is double-edged. One can lie

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or one can tell the truth. By and large, I would say that these functions have about balanced through history.

Similarly, the apparatus which we have developed cuts both ways. Let us, as humanists, start looking at the human function in relation to the apparatus, including language and all the other symbolic structures which we have built up.

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II. The Arts

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LEON KIRCHNER

Notes on Understanding

Fields of learning are part of an intricate human information feedback system, and the relationship between these fields and the societal structures they resonate forms a kind of optimum ecological balance. Our condition relies heavily upon an understanding of this balance. Growth—whether of population or pollution, of Ph.D.'s or G.N.P., or the million artifacts of a successful technological society—may have introduced certain variables that mysteriously alter this optimum balance. When music, a prime indicator of societal balance according to ancient legend and perhaps the last frontier of the irrational, the magical, and the universal, "drops out" under the pressures of accelerating specialization, a warning bell is rung. Although the reflex still works, the function has been obscured not so much by its highly refined conditioning, as by a *loss of understanding* among nouveau humanist proponents of analytic introspection.

In the novel *Magister Luidi,* first published in 1945, Hermann Hesse concerns himself with the interplay of these variables: He portrays in brilliant narrative the resultant deterioration of "understanding" regarding civilization's use of indispensable tools. Not quite a quarter century later, "humanist analytic introspection," with its genotype in the physical sciences, has caught up with the "observer syndrome" and has insured that Hesse's message is "altered by the process of observing it"; so we are left instead observing in a vacuum the fascinating process of the bead game while clouds of smoke pollute the earth's atmosphere.

In some manner, the educated rabble has sensed empathetically and intuitively—that is, without being able to "verify" and without "formal consistency" or "causal explanation," purely subjectively in short—that there *is* a fire somewhere and is willing to dispense entirely with civilization's indispensable tools. Feedback has begun

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to operate with a vengeance. Even in normal times our magnetic propensity for word filings is enough to attract a considerable flow of intellectual debris, but the process of attraction has been boosted by electrifying the magnet, and we have since become so absorbed in the process of filing away ever increasing numbers of words *about* things that we have neither time nor energy left for *things* themselves.

We recognize occasionally that our natures are essentially unchanged, that we are profoundly accoutered with paleolithic physiological functions. Despite enormous changes in ways of life, more in the last decades than in all our past, we still speak a human language not qualitatively modified since the Stone Age.[1]

> DAHFU: "Man is a creature who cannot stand still under blows. Take the horse—he never needs revenge. Nor the ox. But man is a creature of revenges. If he be punished he will contrive to get rid of the punishment and when he cannot his heart is apt to rot from it. Oh Henderson, man cannot keep still under the blows. Those primeval blows everybody still feels. In the beginning of time there was a hand raised which struck. So the people are flinching yet. All wish to rid themselves and free themselves and cast the blow upon the others."
>
> HENDERSON: "You want to know something, Your Highness, there are some good guys who can return good for evil."
>
> DAHFU: "Every brave man will think so. He will not want to live by passing on wrath. A hit B? B hit C? We have not enough alphabet to cover the condition."[2]

Far from recognizing this insight, we try to obliterate it. We have become so enamored of spectacular developments in the branches of science amenable to measurement that we put all human information to this Procrustean Test: If it fits, O.K.; if it doesn't, cut it down. Either it is verifiable or it isn't. Since subjective statements are neither verifiable nor formally consistent, let us thereby exclude them from the status of knowledge. But many in all times have questioned this assumption. Counter to the Pythagorean theory of Plato, Aristotle had maintained that mathematics, "though useful in defining relations between certain events, could not express the essential nature of physical things and processes for it was an abstraction excluding from consideration

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irreducible qualitative differences which nevertheless existed."[3] Kant also recognized that classical physics subjects nature to questioning, under conditions forced upon it by the questioner in order that he may receive measurable indications.[4] More recently René Dubos has expressed the apprehensions of an increasingly larger segment of the scientific community:

> The most influential assumption of modern science is that the best, indeed the only scientific approach to the study of natural phenomena and of living organisms is to divide them into fragments and investigate elementary structures and properties in greater and greater detail. . . . In the course of the reductionist analysis, the scientist tends to become so much involved intellectually and emotionally in elementary fragments of the system that he loses interest in the organism . . . about which hardly anything is known of the mechanisms through which natural systems function in an integrated manner.[5]

That this tendency toward reductionist analysis is an oversimplification is substantiated in recent contributions to philosophy of science. Nevertheless, to negate or discontinue the methods of analytical introspection is not only useless; it is misleading and conceals in its euphoric "trips" dangerous miscalculations. How then can this conflict be resolved? Jung states the case clearly:

> Man is not to be understood as a recurrent unit but as something unique and singular which in the last analysis can neither be known nor compared with anything else. At the same time man, as a member of a species can and must be described as a statistical unit; otherwise nothing general could be said about him. For this purpose, he has to be regarded as a comparative unit. This results in a universally valid anthropology or psychology, as an abstract picture of man, as an average unit from which all individual features have been removed. But it is precisely these features which are of paramount importance for *understanding* man. If I want to understand an individual human being, I must lay aside all scientific knowledge of the average man . . . in order to adopt completely new and unprejudiced attitudes. . . . Whereas knowledge of man, or insight into human character, presupposes all sorts of knowledge about mankind in general.

He goes so far as to say:

> Positive advantages of *knowledge* work specifically to the *disadvantage* of *understanding*. This conflict cannot be solved by an either or, but only by a kind of two-way thinking: doing one while not losing sight of the other.[6]

One might think a more flexible attitude existed in the "magical" world of music. This is not the case, and it is particularly dis-

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appointing in view of the example set by Schoenberg not only in his music, where the attitude is characteristically clear in a way that should be unmistakable to the educated musician, but in the many letters and essays by this composer who is most associated in the public mind with the origin of "substantive information" in the arts in the guise of twelve-tone technique.

"You have rightly worked out the series in my string quartet," Schoenberg writes in a letter to R. K. of July 27, 1932. He continues:

(Apart from one detail: the 2nd consequent goes: 6th note, C sharp, 7th note, G sharp). You must have gone to a great deal of trouble, and I don't think I'd have had the patience to do it. But do you think one's any better off for knowing it? I can't quite see it that way. My firm belief is that for a composer who doesn't yet quite know his way about with the use of series it may give some idea of how to set about it—a purely technical indication of the possibility of getting something out of the series. But this isn't where the aesthetic qualities reveal themselves or, if so, only incidentally. I can't utter too many warnings against overrating these analyses, since after all they only lead to what I have always been dead against: seeing how it is *done;* whereas I have always helped people to see what it *is*! I have repeatedly tried to make W. understand this, and also Berg and Webern. But they won't believe me. I can't say it often enough: My works are twelve-note *compositions,* not *twelve-note* compositions: in this respect people go on confusing me with Hauer, to whom composition is only of secondary importance.

It goes without saying that I know and never forget that even in making such investigations you never cease to live with what is actually the source of your relationship to this music: its spiritual, auditory, musical substance. Still, I can't refrain from speaking out against such analysis, since I've always done so, e.g. in the theory of harmony. The only sort of analysis there can be any question of for me is one that throws the idea into relief and shows how it is presented and worked out. It goes without saying that in doing this one mustn't overlook artistic subtleties.

You may wonder at my talking about this at such length. But although I'm not ashamed of a composition's having a healthy constructive basis even when I've consciously manufactured it, i.e., when it is less good than when it is a spontaneous result, produced unconsciously, I still [don't] care to be regarded as a constructor on account of the bit of juggling I can do with series, because that would be doing too little to deserve it.[7]

Note how Schoenberg's "I can't utter too many warnings against overrating these analyses . . . they only lead to what I have always been dead against: seeing how it is *done*" parallels Schrödinger's observations:

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This fundamental epistemological discovery (David Hume's great discovery that the relation between cause and effect is not directly observable and enunciates nothing but the regular succession) has led the great physicists, Gustar Kirchoff (1824-87) and Ernst Mach (1838-1916) and others to maintain that natural science does not vouchsafe any explanations, that it aims only at, and is unable to attain to anything but, a complete and economical description of the observed facts. . . . It is a salutary antidote against the rashness with which scientists are prone to believe that they have understood a phenomenon when they have really only grasped the facts by describing them.[8]

(This information has altogether escaped the interests of a number of distinguished musical and critical intellects who base their "understanding" on the observation of catalytic devices rather than the resultant impact of the total phenomenon.)

And now note how the continuation of Schoenberg's sentence, "whereas I have always helped people to see what it *is*!" parallels Schrödinger's continuation (both assertions veering from their positivist antecedents):

Yet one ought not, so I believe, to declare that science conveys no understanding. For even if it be true (as they [the positivists] maintain) that in principle we only observe and register facts and put them into a convenient mnemotechnical arrangement, there are factual relations between our findings in the various, widely distant domains of knowledge, and again between them and the most fundamental general notions . . . relations so striking and interesting, that for our eventual grasping and registering them the term "understanding" seems very appropriate.

Although understandable, it is unfortunate that the subtlety of thought in *critical* acceptance of positivist doctrine demonstrable in a Schrödinger or a Schoenberg is not equally reflected in the articles of the musical Establishment which considers itself urbane and even intellectually sophisticated. This situation is perhaps not without parallel in other fields.

We have witnessed any number of the brilliant examples ("I have always helped people to see what it is") Schoenberg selected from the literature of the past, in an "analysis" certainly more informative than the currently fashionable displays of "substantive information." It need only be mentioned that there are various kinds of "understanding" and that the "understanding" utilized by Schoenberg is not only a powerful tool useful to the composer, performer, and historian, but it "explains" in part the astonishing ability which the sensitive nonprofessional auditor exhibits in his understanding of the score when performed. There

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is here a significant difference in emphasis between Science and Art. The riddles of Science require a learned cryptographic methodology not ordinarily available to the nonprofessional, whereas no amount of abstruse and elegant Gongorism can be used to justify a score's failure to be "understood" by the sensitive nonprofessional, once an intimacy with the stylistic language is obtained.

It is true we are occasionally overwhelmed by pseudoscience and pseudolearning: Nonverbal information upon which music, the arts, and the intellectual edifices based upon their study so vitally depend is smothered in an aimless accumulation of precise and unutilized knowledge. Largely unrecognized is the knowledge that efficacy of nonverbal information is based upon "precise knowledge retreated into subconscious habits." Forgotten are the lessons of cooperation between philosopher and craftsman: when scholars were urged not to look down on manual workers, but rather to ask them to explain the mysteries of their crafts.[9]

Scholars in the arts and humanities who have pretensions toward scientific rigor should perhaps become more intimate with their "models." Protagonists in scientific fields who have broadened their interests beyond contingency analysis based on empirical or analytical relevance of concepts and propositions in x- and y-dimensions to include a third or thematic dimension, surely no stranger to the Arts, are yielding to Science ideas of enormous significance.[10]

As size and scope of the university increase (where the medium *has* become the message), the learning process is leveled to an order of sequential linear presentation without regard to individual differences. Size and growth have endlessly fascinated the human mind, and children in every generation have begun the questioning: "What if I were tall as the sky or short as a blade of grass?" What happens to the intricate balance of function when growth occurs in a cell, an individual, a population? What are the complex "governors" that maintain the balance? C. H. Waddington speaks of an "epigenetic landscape" that guides the evolutionary process of selection (in an unaccelerating system and untouched by human reason), and in an essay "On Being the Right Size" J. B. S. Haldane recalls that comparative anatomy is largely the story of the struggle to increase surface in proportion to volume. The institutions we develop necessarily relate and react to changing environmental situations (mutations?) in time. New dimensions are perpetually revealed, and there is no reason to believe that

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the "struggle to increase surface in proportion to volume" is not a highly relevant factor in the viability of institutions.

The increase in size and scope of the modern university necessitates new dimensions in education. We must find the means to increase surface, or the intimacy, relevancy, and timing of the learning experience, in proportion to volume, or size and scope of the university; to establish an optimum balance between fields of learning and peripheral societal structures.

One purpose of education is, as Whitehead has told us:

> A setting in order of a ferment already stirring in the mind. . . . The uncritical application of the principle of necessary antecedence of some subjects to others has, in the hands of dull people with a turn for organization, produced in education the dryness of the Sahara. The heart of the matter lies beyond all regulation. . . . The danger is that it is quite easy to produce a faculty entirely unfit—a faculty of very efficient pedants and dullards. The general public will only detect the difference after the university has stunted the promise of youth for scores of years. . . . The modern university system in the great democratic countries will only be successful if the ultimate authorities exercise singular restraint, so as to remember that universities cannot be dealt with according to the rules and policies which apply to the familiar business corporations.[11]

Josiah Royce's dictum "Civilization is learning to utilize the tools which the race has found to be indispensable" is significant in view of our present condition; for the use to which we put our "indispensable tools" is threatening and has increased the necessity for comprehensive and imaginative programs involving all of our intellectual, artistic, and creative resources. The methods and objectives of the university have been ominously altered in favor of the dominant technological mode. Obsolescence, ever present in accelerating systems, now applies directly to "human increments" who genetically resist being geared into slots that are predictably terminal.

The test of a culture may well be, as Lionel Trilling has it, "the individual self."[12] Progressive deterioration of an awareness of self, of the balance between self and culture, has been directly challenged. It is that "irreducible stubborn core of biological reason which culture cannot reach" that reacts, sometimes violently, to the use of our "indispensable tools." Decisions relying upon linear predictability in an accelerating system inevitably bypass immensely important variables, variables that are perhaps only determinable at different tempi than our present tempo of acceleration,

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or that can only be programmed by a qualitatively different understanding of information.

An avenue toward achieving "balance" can be obtained through the re-examination of the role of our own disciplines in the university and its environs . . . to increase there the presence and awareness of "self" through undiluted, sophisticated, and well-directed programs of relevant "research."

For instance, the symbols of music by their nature require of the student an extraordinary intimacy obtainable via active participation in at least several of the various stages of symbol analysis and realization preparatory to and including performance. With all the bibliographic command at hand, ultimately one faces the musical score and must ask appropriate questions dependent upon this intimacy if one is to obtain "information" that is neither trivial nor useless. The larger the library, the more available must be the performance of the art to which this library is a monument.

Perhaps this observation can apply to other fields as well.

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WOLF KAHN

Uses of Painting Today

PAINTING, LIKE the other traditional forms of ordering experience, appears to be in crisis. It is not a crisis of quality; good work continues to be done. Instead, the sense of crisis comes about because the audience has had a shift of allegiance. A few years back everyone was sure that painting was at the top of the hierarchy of the visual arts. Now all kinds of related media, most of them claiming to be more up-to-date because technically novel, are disputing that tradition. Painting, many feel, is now only one among a number of equally important parallel developments in visual communications. Painters, who have lived comfortably with an unexamined sense of their importance, are feeling threatened. By some this threat is translated into challenge, and their work profits. But many take seriously the professional futurists' slogan that "Painting Is Dead" and help to create a climate in art where "computer art," "mass-produced art," and related gimmicks can be made to flourish.

As electronic music is not very likely to make singing obsolete, so neither will painting be crowded out by these interesting new concerns. Painting is not, after all, simply a historical accident defined by and limited to a special set of social conditions. It has existed in one shape or another from the Lascaux caves to the modern easel painting, because it is form-making at its most direct and most flexible. At all times it has exhibited the same invariable common denominator: A colored substance is taken in the hand and applied to a surface to make lines and shapes. Small children begin to draw as soon as they can hold a crayon. Neither at this early stage nor when adults engage in art activity need we be afraid that new technological developments will significantly alter the underlying *manual* aspect of all art.

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Paintings, we are told, must *communicate*. But, then, everything communicates depending on the willingness of people to look or listen. An artist really has no responsibility to *try* to communicate. If no audience is readily at hand, he is forced to wait till the receptors have become more sensitive and alert. This cannot happen overnight. Only the most conventional work speaks to all on first sight. An audience needs exposure, familiarity, a period of sympathetic watchfulness, before it becomes tuned to respond to any challenging art. This applies to what is generally called "avant-garde" work, but just as strongly to original work in familiar modes. It is far too easy to overlook real values in work at first sight considered "old hat." Bonnard was designated as a latter-day Impressionist because he painted—in broken and fuzzy brush strokes—sun-lit gardens inhabited by women wearing big hats. People took years to realize that his use of color was wholly non-impressionistic and quite daring. There are a number of such artists in our recent past: Edward Hopper, Morandi, Edwin Dickinson come most readily to mind.

Many artists insist on communicating *at* the viewer. Stridency and exhibitionism are characteristics in modern painting as they are in many other arts. Yet paintings can be very reticent. A few, often much under-publicized, artists wish, through their work, to expand the area of privacy surrounding the individual: Rothko, Reinhardt, Agnes Martin, Avery, Diebenkorn, P. Adams, and so forth. They respect the other's right to choose freely to approach a work or to pass it by. Pictures in this rare but laudable mode may tend to look somewhat empty at first glance, but it is an emptiness that does the opposite from the bright aggressive emptiness of much minimal painting. It invites the viewer into the interior of the picture for purposes of reflection and composure, while the emptiness of most minimal painting is projected *out* at the viewer and presents him with an impregnable shell. Thus it becomes a symbol of hostility and anomie, and it is the packaging of non-feeling.

Recently I saw a work by Indiana that points up our predicament. It was a ten-foot-square canvas on which the word "Love" was repeated four times, each "Love" taking up an entire quarter of the total surface. It was painted in equal proportion in white and black, in a manner entirely mechanical; a sign painter could have done the lettering. This work can illustrate for our purposes a number of ironies deriving from the normal associations

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of the word "love" as against its use in this context. First, the very size of the image helps to contradict any ideas of intimacy and tenderness that are normally associated with the word "love." The hard, machine-made look of the painting surface does the same. Black and white, in harsh contrast, may be read as racial antagonism, sensational headlines, cheap publicity, the hard sell; not love. This work and others like it intentionally point out the impossibility of feeling. Those who agree that irony is the best response to emotional claims will have to grant that this is, indeed, the only possible art at the moment.

But not everybody will want to agree here, and there is a rather large range of feelings that paintings continue to deal with. The anguish that lies behind the thin veneer of the consumer society, its terrors and dreams, are the materials of surrealism and expressionism. Tenderness, elegance, even mystical intimations, are found in much current abstraction, as are anger and frustration. The five-hundred-year-old problem of representing the personal essence of daily visual experience continues and certainly will continue to challenge some of the best artists working.

We see, then, that present-day painting deals with a large spectrum of communicable feeling, plus the ironies of non-feeling. We are forced to take seriously all feelings thus presented, at least those we are convinced are genuine. Some feelings are impossible at certain times. We have no great, or even, credible religious painting because we are not religious. Portraits of the rich and powerful have themselves no power because we cannot believe in the majesty of power, and so forth. Surveying the serious art of any period is to catalogue the serious emotional claims of that moment, or the lack of them. But instant communication is no indication of whether or not we are dealing with art at all. The sentimental, nostalgic, trashy work of the time is a more likely vehicle for communication than serious art. Like pleasure in sex, communication in art is a likely by-product, but cannot be called a limiting function.

There are a number of other current attempts to assign *a priori* functions to art, especially in avant-garde circles. A new movement proposes that art should be used to humanize the impersonal monster technology. To this end artists must learn to collaborate with engineers. They learn the use of new materials to create new media, while the engineers are supposed to see

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the possibility of making their devices serve the imagination. In practice this collaboration has failed so far to produce any significant works although the program has attracted large audiences and much Establishment support, as can be imagined in the case of experiments that are highly touted as bridges between humanism and the technostructure.

Another and related idea proposes that art should use as its subject our daily visual environment, made up nowadays almost entirely of the products of the technology. That is the central issue of Pop Art. Billboards, commercials, hot dogs, comic strips are the "given" of our visual field in the same way that apples, rocks, pine trees, and the Mont Ste. Victoire were the visual world of Cezanne. Monet, in showing that a railway station was worthy of an artist's attention, was the precursor of Andy Warhol who did the same for Campbell Soup cans. The artist rescues the debased or ignored parts of existence and points out their value, thus mending the fragmentation of our lives.

There is some real substance in such ideas. In our crowded environment, the individual who derives satisfaction from the density of visual stimuli is a happier person than the aesthete, the nostalgic, who is revolted by the vulgarity of it all. To some degree, we even crave a certain amount of chaos, as long as we are able to contrast it with periods of visual rest. The designers of parkways and interstate systems do not realize this. By legislating a kind of Ladybird Johnson landscape, they have made driving even more boring than it needs to be. It would be preferable to have the interminable stretches of trees and traffic signs interrupted with a decent giant hamburger sign or a nice auto graveyard.

To be a pop artist or to think that pop is an important tendency today makes it necessary to regard the great American junk pile with irony not unmixed with tenderness. But what if we are saddened by what is implied here—the increasing distance from our deeper roots? Then we cannot accept this celebration, no matter how ironic. We feel instead that the audience is being led into further alienation. The non-accommodating artist may be, in the long run, the healthier social force.

Thus painting has had to bear up under all sorts of ideological ballast. Its social functions have generally been rationalizations *a posteriori;* whenever art has had to accommodate itself to pre-existing programs, it has generally ended up lacking in substance.

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Painters persist because painting gives them satisfaction. It continues to command an audience because it can constantly renew itself; it keeps alive the idea of man's unlimited potential to be different while remaining basically the same. Painting with its long tradition has a further advantage: Comparing today's painting with the painting of the past allows us to look at ourselves so as to define our historical antecedents and our historical uniqueness.

In this discussion I have resisted whenever possible the use of shoptalk. Shoptalk obscures the interesting issues that painting shares with other elements of our culture. If it can be carried on in the largest terms, discussion about painting has a legitimate place on campus—not merely discussion, but practice by students who want to get involved in the intimacies of process for its own sake. The structures to support these worthwhile activities will vary in different institutions, but they should be designed for the transmission of *enthusiasm,* rather than knowledge. Knowledge derives from enthusiasm in the arts, but the reverse is not necessarily true. Thus artist-teachers and art historians have to be found whose feeling for art transcends the technical. They should have convictions and project, in their person, the exciting instability in the arts that challenges each artist and each critic to become his own man as strongly as possible, to avoid being torn along with the currents.

This is an ideal, one probably not reachable within the conventional setup of the university art department, which suffers from a confusion of incompatible aims. What should be its role anyway? To teach non-artists about art, or to teach artists? The two groups have very different requirements. If the aim is to teach future artists (and this includes future art teachers), then it is very likely that the university cannot provide these people with the proper climate altogether. The academic climate is formed by the prevailing rationalism, verbal modes, and abstract symbols, as well as a regard for the intellect and its categories. Artists are dedicated to the irrational, to unconscious processes, to intuition, and to the unique particular. Traditionally artists have been allied with the trades, not the scholar. Their audience existed, and still exists, in the marketplace rather than the academy.

The university educates toward balance, rational weighing of alternatives, tolerance. All these are desirable qualities for good

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citizenship, but are unlikely to foster creativity. Plato was correct in saying that artists create in a frenzy. Art is obsession; it is one-sidedness. The artists I know are immoderately committed to their own viewpoint and quite consciously put blinders on to be the better able to trot along their own roads (each one, no matter how ill-paved, amply provided with signs proclaiming it an Interstate Turnpike). Artists treasure their fetishes, prejudices, paranoias, oddities of taste—all useful motive forces in making art. Perhaps too much has been made of abnormality in the make-up of artists. Yet one cannot help noticing the peculiar expressive intensity of works that exhibit a marked pathological element. A university is not in a position to encourage the cultivation of such qualities; one wonders if any school is.

In its quest for detachment, the university art department is forced to reflect the prevailing pluralism of the outside society. This fosters eclecticism and tolerance rather than the subjectivism, intolerance, and dogmatism that are so essential for the artist. In his role as artist, no one is required to participate in the pluralistic scheme. As a university student, one cannot avoid doing so.

Quite unfortunately, the greatest number of American artists under forty are now university-educated. They carry the imprint of the art department in that they are generally more educated in *ideas about art* than in the actual practice, the manual processes, of art. From this, there has arisen a curious and unhealthy reversal in the usual order of artistic development. Once upon a time ideas were generated from the practice of painting. Today, far too much art is generated from *a priori* conceptualizations and programs dictated by critics and "idea-men." Preconceived ideas about art have always had a questionable value in the development of original works, which have been better nourished by all kinds of non-art influences deriving from literature, religion, mathematics (Renaissance, Poussin), optical theories (post-Impressionism), psychoanalysis (surrealism), and so forth. Today's art scene, feeding as it does on so much art-ideology and art-analysis, is like the cat chasing its own tail. Thus, it is no wonder that great stretches of it are arid and boring, resembling nothing so much as a vast Seminar in Problems of Contemporary Art. The huge anonymous output of stripes and color fields by thousands of university-trained "minimal" artists is the transfer of the concerns of the typical 2-D (two-dimensional design) course from the school to the studio and thence to the galleries. (With important exceptions: It is possible to make

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art even out of design problems, as Albers, Agnes Martin, Kelly, S. Wurmfeld, and a very few others have demonstrated.) Nor are the usual "Happenings" and "Environments" much more than typical products of the graduate whose university art experience never made the process of *making* come alive for him; who is instead too amply provided with all the latest intellectualizations, slogans, and programs.

The most likely place to foster the care and growth of future artists and art-educators is still the professional art school. Here there is provision for the very special needs of this kind of student. Commitment is taken for granted; one-sidedness is encouraged. Admissions procedures can be devised to favor those young people whose talents are primarily visual and manual. At a time when general university admissions are so heavily based on high school grades and verbal and conceptual test scores, this is especially crucial. If we must have degree programs in art schools, and the trend is strongly in that direction, it is at least possible to design the non-art curriculum to make some sense to art students, structuring courses to buttress the special stance a person chooses in becoming an artist of today's world, with all the contradictions between specialization and universality this implies. The San Francisco Art Institute has recently published an interesting report on a three-year experiment in teaching the humanities to art students which has tried, with some success, to do just that. The Cooper Union Art School in New York is about to start a four-year program in art history and philosophy of art to be taught by both scholars and practicing artists, whose aim it will be to share enthusiasm rather than to "cover the field." Thus, art students become aware how the past or other disciplines can be personally relevant to artists and to their work.

Unfortunately, the professional art school is presently caught in a very tight and dangerous financial squeeze. First of all, it is forced to compete for teaching talent with the much more adequately financed university art department. Artists, when left free to choose where to teach, invariably prefer the art schools, but end up in the universities where they can get as much as twice the salary prevailing in art schools. Secondly, modes of expression multiply, and each ought to have its representation in the professional art school. (This will appear inconsistent with earlier parts of this article, in which I play down the importance of the

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momentary artistic novelties so widely advertised by media and museums. I have come to believe, however, that the professional art school should reflect the diversity of the "outside." The students have to be exposed to it all, if only to learn, freely, to reject "glamor" for deeper and more enduring satisfactions—which they sometimes do!) The catalogue of equipment of the modern art school goes far beyond the modest list of the traditional studio setup. Schools want to equip a film laboratory, a metal sculpture shop, a ceramic studio, a shop for casting metals and plastics; there may even be the need to equip for the technological necessities of multi-media and other mergers between art and everything else to which this moment is giving rise. It could be exciting to make the art schools the centers of aesthetic research. This might take the burden off the museums to be so up-to-the-latest and allow them to concentrate on celebrating accomplishment instead of experiment.

Artists invent new relations to order our greatly changing visual sensations. They also affirm the validity, to our day, of those traditional relations that continue to give us that sense of stability we all require. Educators have to believe in these necessary and unchanging uses of art—not only for the sake of their students, but for the sake of art, to rescue it from frivolity and to place it near the center of our deepest concerns, where in fact it belongs.

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JESSE REICHEK

A Painter and Teacher as Amateur Humanist

Painting as Hypothesis

PAINTING IS the staging area for all my other activities. It sets the agenda for the experiential issues that engage me and directs the manner in which I deal with them. I am concerned not with making objects, but with formulating hypotheses that will enable me, after subjecting them to the empirical evidence of experience, to order my experience and direct my actions. Painting is my tool for observation, analysis, and theory-building. Its function is not to prescribe behavior in an ideal world, but to describe action in the real world. My purpose in painting, then, is to build a hypothesis concerning the structure of the totality of my experiences.

A structure that is combinatorial and developmental characterizes the totality of experience, as I understand it. Thus, the characteristics of the structure are those of process. I use the word "process" in an active sense—as a verb, not as a noun (*a* process or *the* process). Used as a noun, "process" is finite. Used as a verb, wherein process remains process, it is not terminal. Since combination and development in any system deal with the relationship between components (read shapes or forms for painting) of the system, it is appropriate that I say a few words concerning shape (form). Questions about shape in painting are essentially the same kinds of questions each individual asks concerning his own form (identity). They have to do with the nature of a man's identity that enables him to make sense, or no sense, of his experience, allows him to accept or reject a range of experiences that are never-ending and never predictable. In my case, the forms I use are important only insofar as I can use them to build process-structure. They are the carriers of the structure and have no emotive or evocative function. Since I conceive process-structure to be endless and afocal, the

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components (shapes) must meet certain requirements. They must be capable of continuous transformation and permit and stimulate endless transformations of process-structure. I find that the shapes I am presently using have these characteristics and therein lies their utility. The colors I use are immaterial; any three colors will do. They are selected not for symbolic or emotive qualities, but only as a means of making clear the ambiguity of the structure.

I am all too aware that a phrase such as "ambiguous process-structure which is afocal" comes close to being nonsense on the level of verbal communication. This verbal concoction is an effort to state a hypothesis about the way I think my experiences are ordered and the way I am able to understand the experiences of others and how these experiences relate to mine. It is the inherent structure in which events take place. Although we tend to think of structures as entities that have unity characteristics, the structure I am trying to describe does not have unity. Rather, it permits, generates, and controls change in its components and in itself. I seek to describe the structural characteristics of event-space in my painting, and since events take place at the edge of things, the problem of defining such a structure lies in the links, the patterns of connection.

Systems of order wherein the fundamental premises or goals are based on notions of unity seem to me to be inappropriate models for describing and understanding our patterns of experience. Even though the datum of our experience is that we act out our lives in fragments, we continue to seek unitary structures in which to embed those experiences. God has been dead for a long time, and so have the concepts of salvation and revelation and the derived notion of unity. If we are to find a structure or model that can be relevant to our lives, we must be prepared to throw off the bondage implicit in the search for unity and to accept the freedom that derives from being able to live a fragment. I am prepared to recognize that our experiences and acts, as individuals and as a group, are diverse in their parts, changing in time, divergent in purpose, and equivocal in meaning.

My task as a painter is to develop diagrams (paintings) that describe the structure of experience and assist me in acting meaningfully as I engage in the issues that concern me. My love for the act of painting is an insufficient reason for my continuing to paint. I am not asked to paint, and I do not think I paint for emotional satisfaction. Rewards in the form of approval and recognition have

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been slim, and financial payoffs have been almost nil. Yet I continue to paint. The reason, I suspect, is that this activity is linked to all the things I do. The link is the hypothesis that I have just attempted to state. This hypothesis, which has developed in the studio, is the basis for my understanding, speculating, and initiating thought and action in the other spheres of my life—as husband, father, teacher, citizen. It is the only way that I judge the value of my work as a painter. I find it most difficult to paint when the relevance of the hypothesis in my painting is unclearly related or not pertinent to the other acts of my life.

I have been a painter for more than twenty-five years and a teacher for more than twenty, but have never taught painting. My appointments at the universities where I have taught have been in departments of architecture and city planning where I have attempted to apply the notions developed through painting to the conceptual problems in those fields. Reciprocally, the basic theoretical problems of these fields have stimulated and informed my work in the studio. In recent years I have been conducting a graduate seminar with black and white students on the black community—in particular, the ghetto. We have concentrated on developing conceptual systems rather than on finding solutions to problems. It seemed to me that the hypothesis coming from my painting might have some applicability to the fundamental questions involved in the black community and its relation to the white community: unity and integration; fragments and separatism; divergent past and cultural assimilation; process-structure and community-(nation-) building; patterns of connections and intra- and extra-community relations. The context has been spatial and nonspatial systems. Further amplification seems inappropriate here, but this example may serve to illustrate the kinds of linkages I am attempting to make in my work as a painter, teacher, and citizen.

Random Notes by a Misplaced Professor

I profess to being biased in favor of students who are seriously engaged in trying to understand their lives. I am far less inclined toward students who seek only preparation for a future role in society. The latter will probably end as the perpetuators of the status quo; while the former, certainly fewer in number, may turn out to be the innovators. I am in great sympathy with their desire for change and with their view of life (it closely corresponds to my

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own), which they characterize by such terms as randomness, multiplicity, afocality, fragmentation. They (and I) wish to continue in process and are willing to suffer the pain that comes from living in states of ambiguity; moreover they are finding ways of tolerating ambiguity. (The ways I refer to here are intellectual constructs, not chemical compounds.) These students seem to be saying, to me at least, that freedom lies in that direction. They look to the pattern of their lives as the true source of knowledge and wisdom, and evaluate the patterns of words in books or lectures in those terms. What we say to them is constantly being tested in the laboratory of their experiences. They want to hear what the humanist has to say about humanity. But that desire turns to doubt, impatience, and sometimes contempt when we display a reluctance to test our propositions on ourselves. In asking that what we say be relevant to us in the form of our actions, they are setting the basis and minimum requirements for a dialogue aimed at convincing them that our material is relevant to their lives. Many among these students (they are small in number, but I feel great in importance) seek no such discussion. They see it as useless—a waste of their time and ours—for us to try to determine what is relevant for them. I find myself on the side of the students who feel that they must be able to tell us what is relevant for them and that we must respond to their messages by facilitating their quest. For over six years now these students have articulated their messages in various forms, and we have chosen not to understand, shown limited capacities for understanding, refused to act on their behalf or to permit them to act on their own behalf.

A colleague and friend, whom I admire and respect, has questioned the wisdom of letting the student play such a major determining role in his own education. He asks: Given the poor secondary education to which a student is exposed, how do they find out what they are interested in? How many would have heard of Becket, Genet, Hesse, Lévi-Strauss, Norman Brown, and so on? He feels that a sympathetic and alert teacher can lead them to what they like. My response to the first question is that no matter how poor the secondary education might be, the student arriving at the university is not an empty cup. Indeed, precisely those students who have a sense of their interests are the ones demanding a greater control over their own education. As to the second question, our ignorance differs both as to kind and degree. My feeling is that a sympa-

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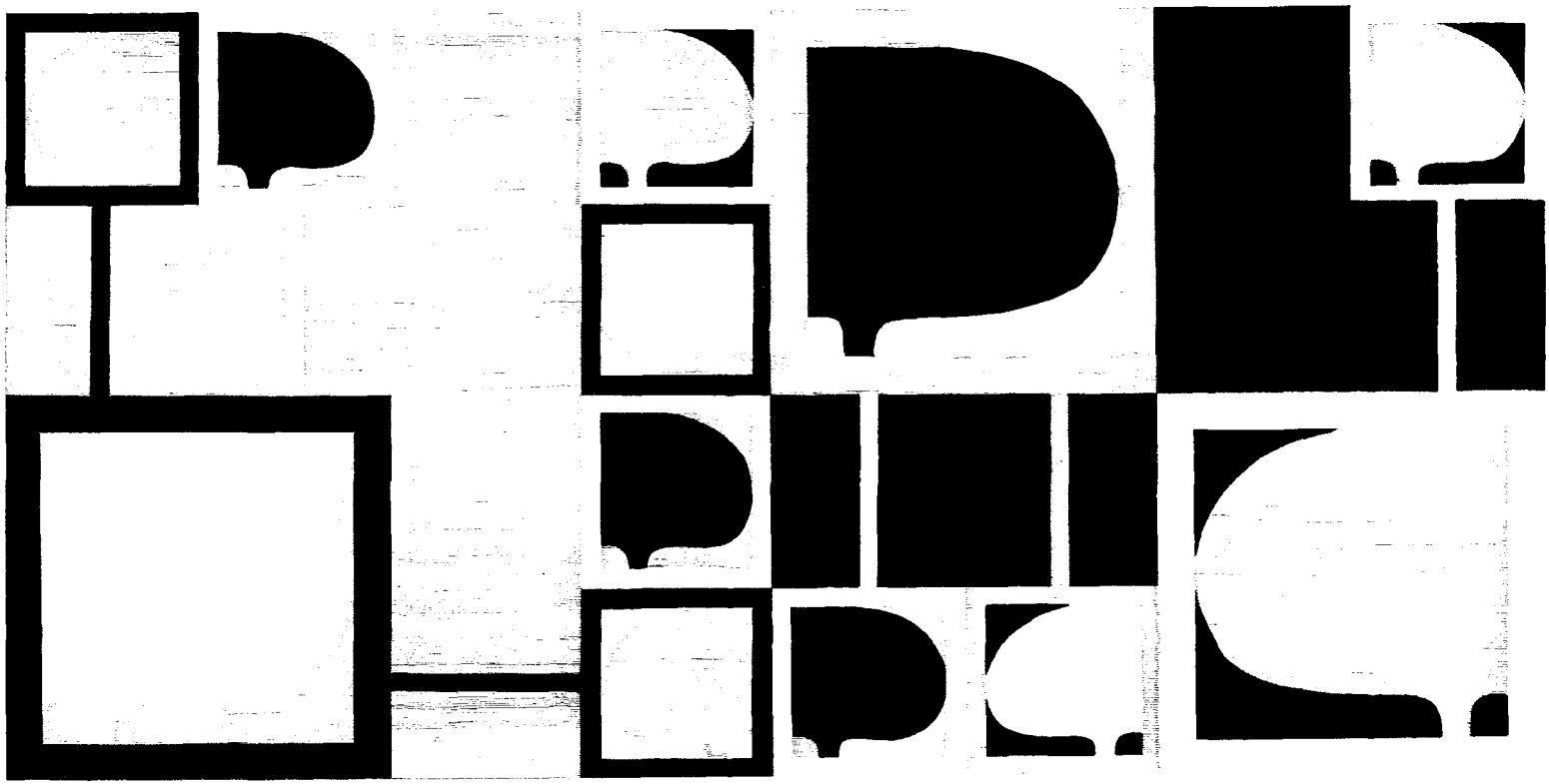

JESSE REICHEK, '68

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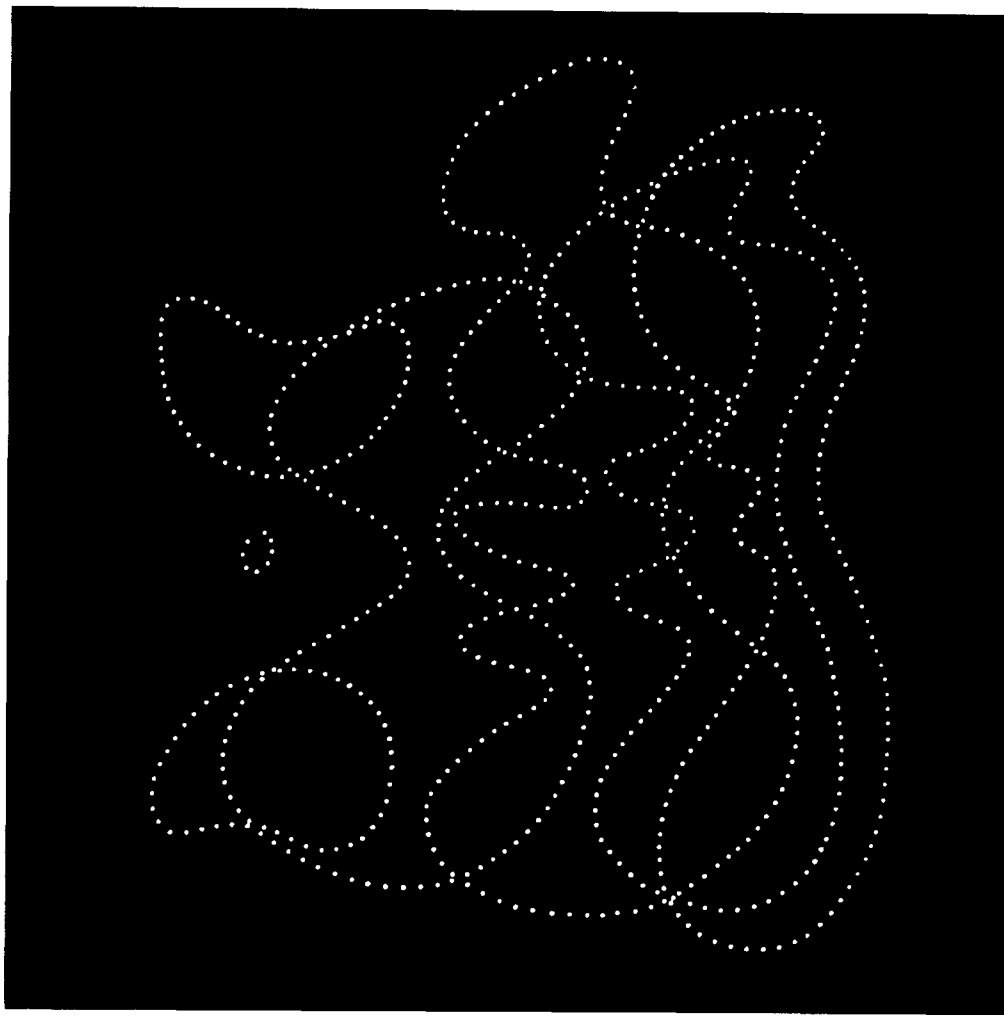

Light Pen Sequence Sketch, 1969 ERIC MARTIN

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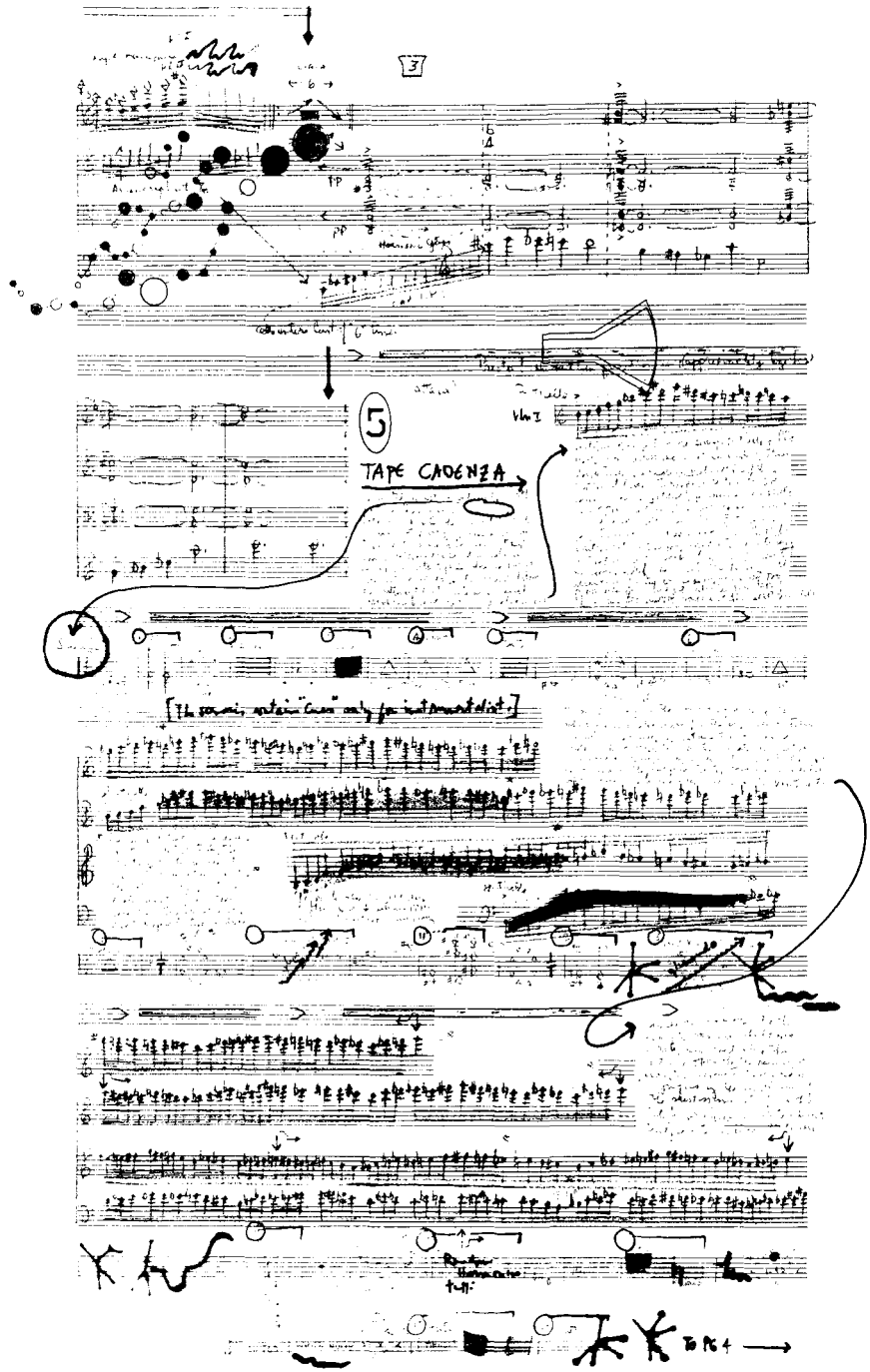

"Quartet #3" LEON KIRCHNER

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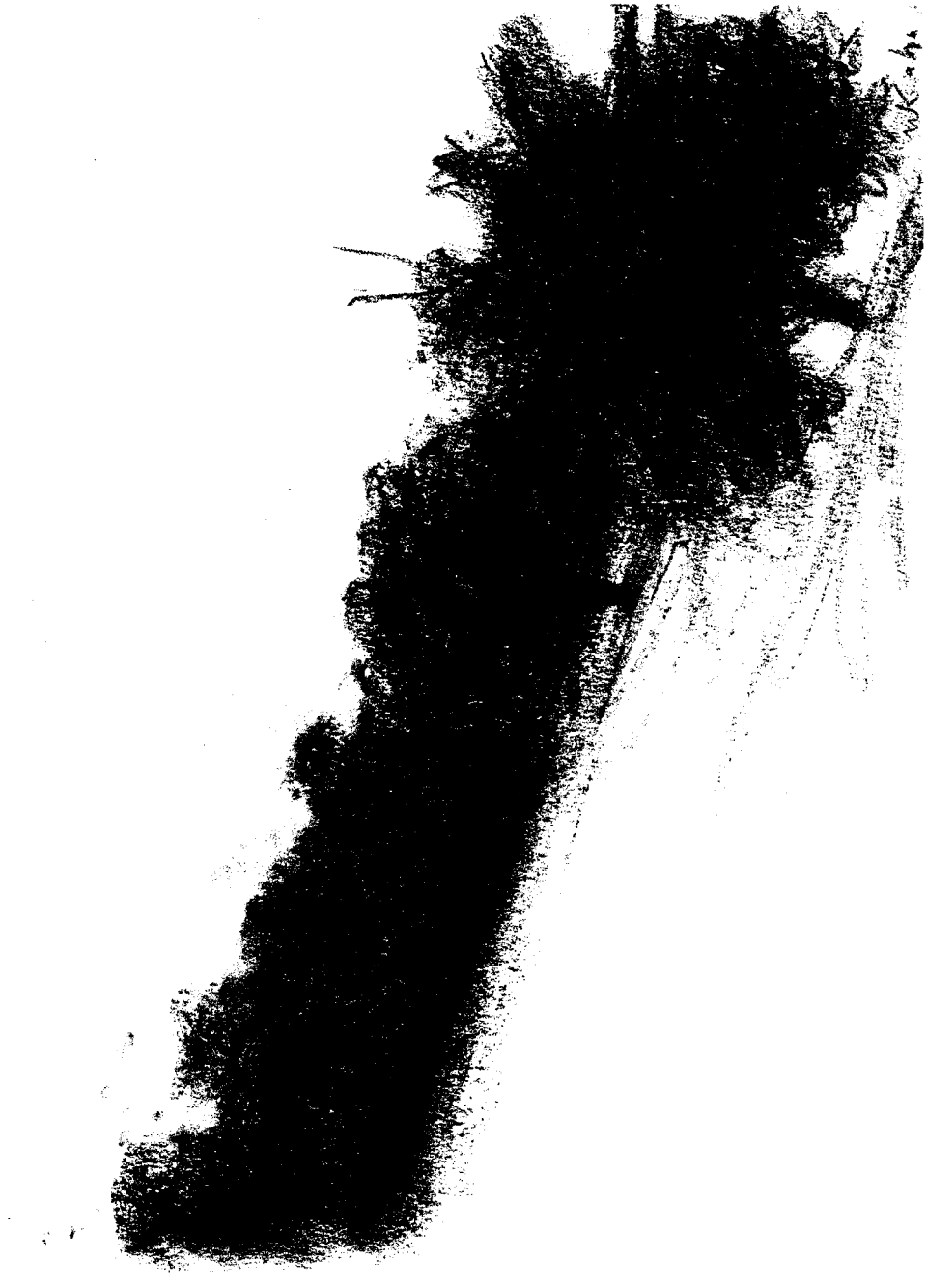

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thetic and alert teacher should follow rather than lead a student to what he likes, making suggestions along the way.

Our inability to tolerate ambiguity concerning the security of our professional and intellectual investment is the greatest obstacle to our meeting the students' demand that they be allowed to decide what is relevant for them; that they be allowed the right to be mistake-making men; that they be allowed to pursue *their* goals, which contradict our goals, and in ways that would question our ways.

These students have a great commitment to love and a great capacity to hate. We are balancing the scale in favor of hate when we frustrate them by not allowing them to choose the objects of their love, which they find mainly through expeditions of discovery in the company of their peers and sometimes with others. They find it necessary to equate love with commitment. In fact, we often ask that they become engaged without, what is to them, the necessary component of loving. Yet I have heard many humanists argue that they justify their own engagement on a hedonistic basis; they love what they are doing. We cannot deny our students what we accept for ourselves. We wish to be free to select the object of our love and accredit that object through our love. Yet when the student wishes to take only those courses that he loves, we deny him the privilege and designate the objects (read curriculum) of his love. We even think we are offering or should offer courses on how to love. We establish priorities for our students—this first, that second; this more, that less. Let them judge! They must be allowed to shift constantly the objects of their love and their priorities as they need to, not as we see it.

One of the ways we can unlock ourselves from the system (educational institutions), which needs re-vamping, if not destroying, is to open the system to other systems that are in conflict. The students to whom I refer represent that kind of a force.

Recent proposals for curricula reform involve the substitution of problem-based courses for subject-courses. But the professor, not the student, sets the problem. If, on the other hand, students were to set the problem, they could seek the expertise and skill necessary to solve it. Each student would then find his own problem, method, and solution within the framework of the same issue.

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We have not learned how to conduct democratic mass education. The population inside the institution does not reflect the population outside the institution. Its form of governance is not democratic. The students, who form the majority in the institution, have the least say in how the activity is conducted. The method is elitist and comes from elites. We talk to ourselves, students, and faculty of the academy. We do not talk to those out there, beyond the confines of the campus. Nor do we invite them in for talks here, on campus. We express our concern about academic standards, professional competence, responsibility to history, and vulgarization. We may have to admit that we just do not think it important to educate the masses and that we have no method to do it democratically. There are those who go further and ask whether we in the academy are educating at all. They suggest that we may only be providing filing cabinets to store the education that is found outside the academy.

There are in our universities the elite and the semi-elite. The elite find that they are most comfortable talking to themselves and for the most part do just that. The dialogue is not, however, restricted to the campus, but reaches out to those segments of the community from which they derive and their counterparts exist: liberal Democrats, conservative Republicans, the middle and upper classes, entrepreneurs, managers, and so forth. The semi-elite have taken a step to the left and seek to increase their dialogue outside the campus. The groups in the community with which they wish to make contact are precisely those which do not have a sizable representation in our universities, and so these groups must focus their attention off campus. Inherent in the semi-elites' position is the assumption that the university has something that is useful for the part of the community with which they are concerned and that it is our function to make it understandable and available. Further, they seek to change the monologue—we to them—into a dialogue, so that voices that have not yet been heard on campuses may be able to make useful contributions to the academy.

The recent events in our universities, cities, and around the world seem to tell us that unless we are prepared to accept a dialogue with those who have been silent too long, the direction of the monologue may be reversed. In order to establish this dialogue, we in the university must begin by taking a hard look at the aca-

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demic standards we use to evaluate our curricula, teachers, and student performance. We may need to seek new standards, differently arrived at, standards that are inclusive rather than the exclusive ones we now use. We may wish to ask: Standards for what? for whom? We may be setting standards for ourselves and the like-minded. We may find that we set standards not in response to the issues and problems that exist in the world, but as a means of validating our disciplines—a way of keeping them understandable to ourselves and relevant to us. If the dialogue that the semi-elite is seeking increases, we may find that unless we change the kinds of standards we use, we will become irrelevant. A change in standards does not necessarily imply a lessening of the need for disciplined work or the acquisition of the skills required for effective action. It does look to a greater distribution of such skills and a re-evaluation of their application. The necessary first condition for a revitalized university is that it permit and stimulate greater diversity in the institution and find ways of supporting and developing the existing and latent diversity in the community.

We have seen a marked increase in the volume of talk concerning community relations within the university. The relation that in fact exists can, for the most part, be expressed in distance. While faculty express a desire and a need to close the student-teacher gap, we lay the major burden for such effort on our students. Our students are forced to move toward us. We require courses. We give grades. We control the job market. We set the style. We must begin to move toward our students if the distance is to be more rapidly and more properly diminished. We expect the community to understand us, but we worry about popularization and vulgarization and most often decide against them. Portions of the community, with whose values we are less comfortable, are *used* as a source of data and as an impersonal laboratory for testing our ideas. More often than not, we rig the tests by submitting our values, standards, and processes to a more sympathetic laboratory, the academic community.

Our reach and mobility are limited by our overwhelming concern with history and soundness. We are afraid of being fools, and it may be that we should be foolish more often. We fear risk, knowing that living is a risky business. We ought to be willing to talk with our students (read offer courses) on subjects that are not of

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our field. We ought to risk our reputations by attempting to discuss concepts derived from our fields in the context of other fields. We ought to open ourselves up to classroom situations where the extent and soundness of our knowledge is small, but our desire to learn is great. We may be too concerned about our responsibilities and not enough about our possibilities. Risk is related to payoff: We all anticipate acceptable payoffs and fear unknown payoffs.

Students come to us in a variety of forms composed of diverse materials. Although we all recognize this, our institutions continue to act on the student as a mix-master and cookie-cutter. We put in the "proper" ingredients, whirl away and call it undergraduate education. Having manufactured the material we then apply the cookie-cutter and call it graduate education. Some of our students are busily engaged in avoiding this process. When they successfully dodge our effort, we call them the creative minority and take pride in our system because it allows for them to pop up. The less artful dodgers, the less energetic, and the less persistent drop out. It seems to me that our product is the mediocre majority, and the by-product is the creative minority. How can we turn this around?

We are too concerned with teaching methods, for example; words and thought as against workshop and experience. We hope that by finding the most appealing device we will have solved the problem of making our courses and curricula vital and responsive. We are also too preoccupied with deciding which of the items in our inventory are the most appropriate to display or investigate—Shakespeare or Faulkner, Michelangelo or Minimal, Bach or the Beatles, the Peloponnesian Wars or the Vietnam War, and so on. Individual teachers will determine the content and method of their courses according to their outlook, ability, conviction, and style. The individual student should decide the merits of that content and style. Some will approve; others will not. Those who do not must be free to reject and to seek other alternatives in an open market. We teachers must risk the possibility of having our obsolescence and irrelevance demonstrated. If we extoll the virtues of pluralism, let us then have some. If we acknowledge the value and the power of the students to awaken us to new issues, new values, and new forms of action, let us then make it possible for them to change us. If we seek effective challenge from our students, let us then find ways to make it possible in a real sense—where we must persuade,

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learn, change, or lose. Challenge from our students tends to be meaningless when we always appear to be the winner.

Some of us congratulate ourselves that our students' behavior is a result of the messages we have been sending them. But we often fail to see or seek to understand the messages they are sending back to us. We often expect to have our messages bounce back to us in essentially the same form and content that we have sent them. Although students receive our messages, they do not just reflect them. They reflect on them—add, subtract, rearrange—and then send *their* messages to us. Our professions, our courses, and our universities have not displayed any real eagerness to receive these messages without distorting their meaning or to respond and deal with them.

We tend to be too easily satisfied by the act of posing the difficult question and use that act as a means of foreclosing on our responsibility to respond. When the response to these questions demands action, we are too eager to lay claim to being scholars and not activists.

The notion that the present-day university is a defender of "the values we hold dear" does not seem to make sense. (In certain isolated incidents exceptions have occurred). When we attempt to act on these values and when these actions, directly derived from these values, threaten the university, our actions are neither defended nor supported. Value-systems are only games that people play unless they are converted into action-systems. We are indeed permitted to play our value-system games on the condition that they are not translated into action. The university never tires of pointing out that it is concerned with values and trots out the humanities as proof. Meanwhile the institution, locked into a position of dependency upon the social, economic, and political status quo, carries out its functions using what is the "real" action-determining value-system.

I do not think that many of our universities, colleges, or departments are prepared to make revolutionary changes in their curricula. Nevertheless, we must begin to respond to the demands of our students. We need not wait to be forced or pushed by student uprisings. We can take some initiative on our own.

The needs of our students are various. Some prefer the curric-

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ulum as is—required courses, prerequisites to courses, and major fields. Others wish to make more unconventional choices within the system. Still others seek another system. Perhaps 90 per cent of the students want to maintain the present arrangements. Of the remaining 10 per cent, half might choose to make changes within the system, while the other half might want to devise another system. We could satisfy those students who want to make changes within the system by allowing them to take any combination of courses available in the curriculum as a way of meeting the required total. To satisfy the remaining students, a cadre of faculty could be established representing various fields. The students and faculty would work together in setting up courses. We might expect a mixture of scrambled courses and student-faculty initiated courses. I am suggesting an open-market situation in which the consumer's choice is based upon his assessment of his need. This notion may enable our universities to change in an orderly fashion and in a way that would be responsive to our students' view of how they can best understand their lives and their society.

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MICHAEL O'HARE

Designers' Dilemma

EVERYONE HAS to put up with architecture and city planning at close quarters, which makes it easy for me to claim the reader's attention; this is fortunate because after I discuss the current crisis in design, I will ask him to help straighten it out.

The roots of the designers' dilemma lie in the inception of what may someday be identified as the Democratic Style—that is, the appearance of a new client. In itself, this is nothing new; the history of architecture is punctuated by recurrent crises usually marked by the emergence of new "styles" as one class of clients replaces another. Here Pevsner's example is conveniently epigrammatic: "The Gothic style was created for Suger, Abbott of St. Denis and counsellor to two kings of France; the Renaissance for the merchants of Florence, bankers to the Kings of Europe."[1] The important influence that technological advance has on the form of buildings does not alter the general truth that a building evolves as a response to the needs, whether symbolic or practical, of the people who buy buildings.

In general, the designer's effort to satisfy the man who hired him has been satisfactory for both parties. Architects have avoided such general disrepute as lawyers suffered in the eighteenth century. Of course, there were other parties to most buildings: the townsfolk who were not permitted beyond the nave of the cathedral; working men of Haussmann's Paris or Sixtus' Rome; the servants in the stately country houses. But while a study of the French Gothic cathedral as it served the medieval burgher or peasant might enable one to understand better the common man of the period, it will not help one to understand the building; the cathedral was built for someone else, and it was never intended to please the rabble. Similarly, the Duomo in Florence was built for the bour-

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geois; it is pointless to seek in it expression of the whole society's *weltanschauung*.

Pyramids for the Pharaohs; St. Denis for the Abbott; Santa Maria del Fiore for the merchants; Versailles for the Sun King—a familiar history of good solutions to the new problems presented by new customers. A New Boston for everybody—the flow of solutions seems to suffer from drought with the latest change in the designer's client, as Western society has come to believe that everything that happens should be good for everyone, or at least average out to a net benefit. The designer's success in shaping an environment tends to be measured by whether he has made a good place for everyone who has occasion to be there and not just for the person who hired him. I have deliberately phrased this principle in the loosest possible terms in order to establish a point of departure, but even this broad assertion, which says nothing about what "good" is, points to a radical change in the society's demands on designers. It might be argued that we are just seeing substitution of one set of design desiderata for another; it is certainly true that certain symbolic and expressive requirements have been replaced by "functional" ones. But the change in the client (the man "for whom" the environment is built) is fundamentally more important.

A particular example will illustrate the problems raised by consciousness of the ultimate clients. The *State University of New York* is an institution based in Albany, with thirty-two campuses across the state. I was involved briefly with the master planning for the new campus of the *State University of New York at Buffalo* (ultimate population: fifty thousand). The direct client—the buyer of the buildings—was the *State University Construction Fund,* which would build the campus and turn it over to SUNY for SUNY-Buffalo's use, except that the living accommodations for students were being built by another agency (the *New York State Dormitory Authority*) under a similar arrangement.

The ultimate clients in this four-story mare's nest were, of course, the students and faculty at Buffalo. Though the architect's office was in direct contact with those officials of the local administration responsible for the building program, the authority clearly rested at Albany with the pocketbook. Even dealing with a dean or vice president for development is not equivalent to dealing with students and teachers. What is the responsibility of the architect in such a situation, particularly when, as happened in this case, various elements of the building program provided by the immediate

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client contradicated his own stated intentions and the apparent needs of the ultimate clients?

While a benevolent ideology makes the perceived client more complex and inaccessible, a democratic ideology further complicates the problem, since we believe not only that people should get what is good for them, but also that they themselves should decide just what that is—not only if it turns out to be tailfins, but also if it means George Wallace for everyone because most people want him. Although we believe this, we tend to have certain reservations (especially around election time) about too much democracy; in any case, there is no substitute for leadership. The designer is consequently stuck with a problem of morality and principle with which he is poorly equipped to deal. Baldly put, he has to choose between giving people what they want and what (he thinks) is "good" for them (or, come to think of it, persuading them to want what is "good" for them).

Two corollary problems arise. The first is mainly a matter of technique: How does one go about finding out what clients want? The second is harder: How does one decide what is good for them? Going back to the example of the university: How does one survey the desires and needs of a student body that will not exist for five years or even, without much sociological research, those of the existing population? The educational and social policies of the university are presumably set by the faculty and administration—in other words, they "know" what is good for the students in general terms. But what is the architect to do if he discovers a radical difference between the students' desires and the administration's intentions for them? And, incidentally, what if he thinks the client's normative intentions are simply wrong?

Another example: It is apparently our collective intention to rehouse the urban poor. A lot of these people are black, so one large task before us is designing lodgings for poor black people. Up to now, we have provided as public housing a bargain-basement version of what is offered to the urban middle class; the disastrous result has been adequately recorded, though not, of course, fully explained. There are not many middle-class black people, so the effective perceived client has been middle-class white people. It used to be bad manners to wonder in print whether middle-class blacks want to live the way middle-class whites live, but this is no longer so, and the question is debated by blacks and whites all the time. Whether poor black people want to turn into middle-class

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anything is also in doubt; whether all blacks want the same thing is equally unlikely. Up to now it has been assumed that for any good American, being more bourgeois followed being richer, but the explanation is beginning to seem less simple. We have come to realize that a basic fault of public housing for blacks has been that it was designed for what middle-class white architects and planners thought poor black people should become.

With bitter experience we see the problem in more subtle terms. Public housing for blacks should make it possible for poor blacks to live like lower-class blacks with more money, or it should shelter a dynamic process enabling poor blacks to turn into whatever they want to be, or it should provide for both this dynamic process and some ultimate stable situation. It should not be a straitjacket in which occupants have to live like the bourgeois of Stuyvesant Town whether they like it or not. Maybe it should not be built at all. (I have dealt with public housing because it emphasizes the communications problem facing the designer—who is almost certainly white and will remain so for some years, given the shortage of black professionals. Incidentally, there is reason to believe that housing for middle-class whites has not been such a raving success either, but the occupants have political power and money to soften a bad fit.)

When the designer tries to choose among these alternative possibilities, he must communicate across a wide cultural gap—with people who have not enough experience with alternatives to specify real desires—in order to find out what the client wants or needs. If our professional expertise indicates that the democratic preference is for Wallace (not "good" for the clients), we have to wrestle with our consciences. There are wheels within wheels here: The complex-client problem occurs in the form of a housing authority—or a private developer—that makes decisions for the tenants and actually buys the buildings.

Another aspect of the design crisis should be mentioned here. As over-all prosperity has increased, the standards for design success or failure have also risen: A good building—or any other product—has to be a lot better than it could be when the consumer's choice was between nothing and something. Consequently, today not only does the designer have to provide an environment that satisfies vastly more people than used to have a say in the matter; he has to satisfy them even better than the designer of an earlier day had to satisfy his clients. (For example, the heating and ven-

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tilating system in a cheap office building is so much better than the best available to a millionaire during the last century that the comparison is almost absurd.) This narrowing of the range of acceptable solutions has demanded a qualitative change in the designer's approach that will not be effected for several years; nevertheless it only exacerbates the moral problems I have tried to spotlight here. The problems of technique it raises are interesting, but probably not germane. For our discussion, its importance lies in the added pressure that has been brought to bear on the designer to see himself as practicing a problem-solving discipline rather than using the medium of buildings for personal expression.

Designers, whether architects, engineers, planners, or landscape architects, have to choose the ends to which their skills should be applied, and making these choices correctly is not within their professional competence. They need a lot of help very quickly, and that is what all this has to do with the future of the humanities. I do not mean to suggest that the crisis of design method is not serious; designers can, however, handle it themselves. Methods more reliable than unaided intuition for synthesizing physical forms in response to particular sets of constraints and desiderata are being developed aggressively. Advances are being made even faster in analytical procedures for evaluating alternative solutions—however they are synthesized. What designers cannot handle alone is the welter of moral issues outlined above. This paper is intended to be a plea that humanists be willing to assume a consultative role with the designers who will, as we have so often heard, duplicate the existing stock of buildings in this country in the next twenty-odd years. It is also intended to be a warning, because it should be understood that the value judgments required to begin a design project will be made one way or another. Design decision-making is inextricably involved with issues of preference and the selection of ends, as should be clear in the examples already cited. Let me propose another that may be more surprising to the nontechnical people I am trying to recruit. Safety factors in construction are a recognition of uncertainty; most engineering texts have a passage like the following:

> If the strength of a structure, built as designed, could be predicted with precision, and if the loads and their internal effects . . . were known with equal precision, then safety could be assured by providing a carrying capacity just barely in excess of the known loads. However, there are a

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number of sources of uncertainty in the analysis, design and construction of . . . structures . . . In addition . . . consideration must be given to the consequences of failure. In some cases, a failure would merely be an inconvenience. In other cases, loss of life and significant loss of property may be involved.[2]

The safety factor is a multiplier by which the strength of each part of the structure is increased over our best estimate of "just enough." It results from a more or less sophisticated statistical analysis of the probabilities of various kinds of overload or understrength. Thus, a given safety factor might provide a 10 per cent chance that a certain structure will fail over fifty years, considering the likelihoods of the beams being slightly flawed or misinstalled, an unusual snowfall and consequent high roofloads, or a wind higher than usual for the site. For more money, we can buy more safety—a certain number of dollars spent on larger members will reduce this probability of failure to 5 per cent. We cannot reduce it to zero for a finite amount of money, and it costs much less to reduce a 10 per cent failure probability to 9 per cent than it does to go from 5 per cent to 4 per cent. Moreover, there are other things to spend the money on; we might use the cost of reducing the failure probability of a new apartment house from 10 per cent to 5 per cent to rebuild an existing slum dwelling whose failure probability is now 25 per cent, or whose probability of causing social failure in its inhabitants approaches unity.

Since the safety factors to be used in construction are a matter of legislation (building codes are usually statutory and following "accepted practice" is a defense against malpractice suits), individual designers do not have to cope with this allocation problem each time they design. The decisions are made by committees of engineers who write and revise the codes. The only source of values they have is the tremendous outcry that accompanies the occasional failure, as was recently the case in England over the partial collapse of a block of flats after a gas explosion.

No one objects when the resources of society are directed toward providing very small failure probabilities at the expense of needed investment in other buildings. That human lives have to be weighed against money is ignored in public discussion where the assumption that "lives are priceless" is implicit. The resultant tendency toward ultraconservatism is appropriate to the expressed attitudes of the society. But it is interesting to consider how few lives are lost and how little property is destroyed as a result of inadequate safety

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factors as compared to other risks that we seem to accept (cigarette smoking, automobile driving, and so forth). Perhaps the money we spend providing this kind of safety might be better applied attacking problems that cause widespread social failures and many wasted lives rather than a few shortened ones. (Notice, by the way, that many famous disasters resulted from inadequate foreknowledge of the kinds of forces a structure would suffer, not from an inadequate provision for excesses in known loads.)

I am not sure that our building codes are too conservative; I am sure that they are either too conservative or too risky. Since the real issues involved are not considered explicitly when the codes are written, the odds are slim that the results correspond to the decision society would have made had it been aware of the issues. It can be argued that the market system translates the popular attitude toward safety into economic signals that the code writers substitute for discussion of the basic issues. It should be apparent on reflection that the necessary public ignorance of the "technical" issues involved in relating safety to pocketbooks, coupled with the absence of choice in "safeness" of buildings on the market, cripples this mechanism, which depends on a free market.

For an intelligent policy decision in matters like safety, we need to consider some very sticky problems, of which the relationship between lives and money is only the envelope. We also have to consider the relationship between death and crippling injuries. We need to know what to make of a choice between the death of one person and a tax (for repairs, say) of 1 per cent on the life incomes of a hundred (a thousand?) people. We must think about the significance of a building that is safe according to a "rational" consideration of costs and risks, but makes its inhabitants nervous because they think it is "less safe" than their usual environment. In other words, we need not only a set of prices for the commodities we are handling, but techniques for handling moral problems.

I must stress that I am not describing problems that await solution, like building safe houses more cheaply or curing cancer, but rather problems that are being "solved" all the time. They are being solved incompetently because the decisions have been left with people whose skills lie in other directions and because the data required to attack them are not made available. We are paying for these wrong solutions just as surely as we pay for incompetent solutions to problems of economic regulation, or structural design, or checkbook balancing.

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So far I have dealt with two kinds of problem: One involves decisions apparently touching only on technical expertise, but in fact concealing implicit value choices; the second is a resource allocation problem in which ethical values have to be given a money price. Other problems can be isolated within the over-all crisis; some are purely internal dirty linen, like the rise in functional standards I mentioned earlier, but others cannot be so easily assigned.

It was gratifying to see the public support, weak as it was, for the boom in landmark building preservation. But the public indifference toward the poor visual quality of so much new architecture —especially housing—is a painful one for the modern designer in any field. Granted, it is easier to focus concern on the imminent destruction of an existing building of historical or visual importance than on the lack of quality of a building about to be built. Historic buildings are unique; there will never be another Pennsylvania Station. But now that Third Avenue has been lined with glazed-brick piles of no distinction whatever, the loss of opportunity is, for this generation and the next, just as final as the loss of Penn Station. Even if the remaining lots are filled with the best architecture we are capable of, the street will still be a mess.

The ugliness problem is one that designers cannot do much about—at least, not much more than they are doing. But it does raise some interesting philosophical questions. When asked about the conflict between aesthetics and function, the modern designer usually responds by saying that aesthetics is a function; that one of the purposes of an artifact—whether teakettle, building, or street—is that it should please its users and beholders. (Until recently it was also believed that satisfying the object's required functions, in the narrow sense, would naturally result in a pleasing aesthetic form, but we have come to see that this is merely an evasion of the issue and, incidentally, probably false.) This response immediately raises the issue of democracy again. Reflection on the American automobile suggests that the popular taste is either wholeheartedly for Wallace or very pliable. Whatever the reasons for the popular liking for bad design, designers are getting fed up with the failure their best efforts meet in the marketplace. One can easily be nostalgic for the days when the architect had only to please a cultivated nobleman whose taste became sophisticated by serious amateur dabbling in the arts during his many idle hours.

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I am not unaware of the elitist leaning I have revealed in the last paragraph. It may be that professional training has brainwashed me into concurrence with an aesthetic party line, but after a struggle with my democratic self in this regard, I am still reasonably confident in my distinctions between good buildings and bad, and reasonably certain that designers and many critics (and lots of other people, though not enough) know something that gives their aesthetic judgments some objective weight. I have found a community of educated taste whose members are in agreement in matters of artistic value over a broad area. Moreover, there are grounds for useful communication among us so that when we disagree, we usually find that our basic values correspond and the disagreement is a matter of interpretation. Furthermore, the judgments of this community have shown a tendency to anticipate the eventual verdict of history—more and more people come to value that which this small community identified as good when it first appeared.

I do not think this is anything to be ashamed of; I certainly do not demand any democratic rights to participate when the mathematicians evaluate research or to vote with the physicians when they decide whether butter or cold water is good for burns. But the assertion of professional competence thus described has to be carefully limited. Witness the embarrassment suffered by the doctors who thought that Medicare was a medical issue. The distinction designers have to draw is between their ability to discern visual quality in the face of a popular time-lag of some twenty-five years, and their lack of a charter, or special ability, to determine how people should want to live.

What to do about all this? And who should be doing it? The fashion at this stage of a "crisis" report is to call for a "restructuring of society," and I am tempted. After all, most of the problems I have discussed result from a contradiction between the stated aims of the society and its usual way of doing things. Since I do not know how to design societies, however, I will leave the long-term solutions aside and concentrate on things that can be done right away.

Some of these things are already happening. In the short time since I entered architectural school, I have seen it become typical for students to insist on a searching study of the social goals of their class projects. The debate over the architect's role (whether it should be prescriptive or technical, and so forth) is continuous

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and fervent. The situation has threatened the traditional mechanics of architectural education in many schools and has led instructors to complain that the students would rather do programming than designing, that they are incapable of "committing themselves" to specific building designs. What is really happening is that the students are refusing to make architectural decisions just to produce a building; they are insisting that anything they design has to be consistent with a "commitment" they seem to have made before they came to architectural school—a commitment to their social consciences. It is an unfortunate but probably temporary dislocation that they are making difficult the acquisition of the purely technical and expressive skills that their instructors correctly take to be the most important things they can teach.

I expect that these students will bring to their professional practices a keen ability to distinguish between the decisions they should be making as architects and the choices they have to make because someone else did not do his homework. They will force their clients toward the kind of consciousness of environmental-social interaction that present-day building buyers (schools, industry, government) so conspicuously lack. They will also have a much better chance of making in a responsible and explicit way the social and political decisions they unavoidably face. At the same time, these Young Turks are already reaching the point where good will and determination no longer substitute for competence. The historical isolation of design schools—despite university affiliation—inhibits the students' search for the sociology, economics, political science, and humanities courses that their insistence on relevance demands.

Engineering schools show less promise in this area at the moment, probably for two reasons. First, engineering is not considered a humanistic discipline. Any expansion of the engineering curriculum to include such non-scientific subjects looks very much like the simple addition of "frills" and has to compete against rapidly expanding scientific subject matter. Second, the best engineering schools tend to think of themselves as preparing researchers and not designers. Unfortunately, the pecking order in engineering today puts the man at the drafting board far down the list, so the usual path of upward progress moves an engineer away from designing as quickly as possible and into research or administration. In fairness it should be said that some schools, recognizing the likelihood that their students will be administrators, are en-

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riching their programs with "liberal arts." But if students do not understand why those "culture courses" matter, such revision does not seem to help much. Peer group judgment is strong stuff, and everyone knows how easy it is to forget a poem learned under duress.

The planners have had an easier time expanding the scope of their education, since public policy-making seems more appropriately a part of the planner's function. Progress here has been on two fronts; first, a search for tools to improve the design process; second, a search for ways to involve affected communities in their own futures. Exciting experiments are under way in applying the existing technology of systems analysis, computer modeling, and decision theory to the synthetic part of the planning process. Some computer models, such as the water pollution project at Harvard's Center for Population Studies, are directed toward simulating the real political jockeying that surrounds a large project rather than including only the conventional technical cost-benefit indicators. On the other side, the whole notion of advocacy planning[3] and such "on-the-street" educational projects as the Harvard Urban Field Service are concrete realizations of the importance young planners attach to implementing the democratic ideal.

All this has come at the expense of the studio work (design projects) that used to be the principal part of a planning education; a similar erosion of the studio should probably occur in architectural schools. The changes in the problems an architect must solve suggest the need for a new kind of architect, and the master-apprentice format of the design studio, in which the trade secrets are passed down from generation to generation, does not have the capacity for producing this new breed of designer. Many established architect-teachers recognize that the last generation of designers is not competent to train the next one; they also realize that this observation is no reflection on them. This is why efforts to broaden the curriculum are so vigorous at many schools in this country and abroad. The existing pool of design teachers is coming to recognize that its part in the next generation's education, while primary, should be limited and generally restricted to those technical skills of manipulating the interactions of environment, behavior, and expression that used to be all of design.

It is first of all in the educational process that the designers need help from the humanists. I have described several general design problems in which the humanist's skills—whether he be historian, philosopher, social critic, or whatever—are essential and

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not replaceable by those of the designer or even the behavioral scientist. We have to learn how to recognize problems of value conflicts, how to trace consequences of values in specific actions, and how to lead our clients to recognize these same issues. To this end, much can be done simply by making available to design students course work in the academic areas that treat these problems. This means not only cross-registration out of the design schools, but also a recognition by the instructors that the course material has to be useful to people who will be applying it to practical problems with immediate consequences. With regard to the design school itself, I see no reason why visitors from humanities departments—if only for their own protection—do not beat down the door to sit in on architectural juries (which are traditionally public) or reviews of planners' projects, or even involve themselves in a more continuous way with the education programs at design schools. I wish they would.

I expect that the present generation of architectural students will come to demand this help. Their future clients will not, and this is where humanists in search of relevance will have to take the lead. I see only one way to stop the flow of deans who have no idea what students want or need in the way of dormitories and corporation vice presidents who foist glass tombstones on our cities: The academic humanists must demonstrate by every pedagogical technique available that moral decisions have consequences and that just because some values cannot be measured quantitatively does not mean they do not count. This is going to be fairly hard, because professional humanists are usually terrified of making any decisions that have consequences. The analytic habit of mind leads, by identity, toward studying the reasons why something happened and not toward trying to see what should happen in the light of such-and-such principles.

But that is not the most difficult thing they will have to do. They also have to be consultants and advise on decisions that will have consequences—and not only in the abstract. In the first place, there is a long lag-time between the institution of the educational changes I have discussed and the wide appearance of the designers and clients who have benefited from them. In the second place, these designers and clients will be particularly sensitive to their need for continuous assistance with the problems they have learned to recognize and will demand continuing consultative help on their real projects. Thus, in the short run we will need help because we do not

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know what we are doing, and in the long run we will need help because we do.

I have phrased the last part of this paper very generally because I frankly do not know how to get the philosopher into the drafting room or the board room. At the moment, I can only see that the designers have problems, both educational and practical, that we need help with. If humanists are good for anything, they should be better at these problems than anyone else, and they do not have to be especially humane to pitch in, since they suffer along with everyone else from bungled design.

References

1. N. Pevsner, *An Outline of European Architecture* (Baltimore, 1960), p. 289.
2. G. Winter, L. C. Urquhart, C. E. O'Rourke, and A. H. Nilson, *Design of Concrete Structures* (New York, 1964), pp. 109f.
3. The relationship of the planner to his client and the question of whether his client is the local population of a neighborhood or the citizens of an entire region as represented by their government have been discussed frequently in the literature. Recent numbers of the *Journal* of the American Institute of Planners contain several articles of importance. See, in particular, Lisa Peattie, "Reflections on Advocacy Planning," *Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (March, 1968), pp. 80ff.

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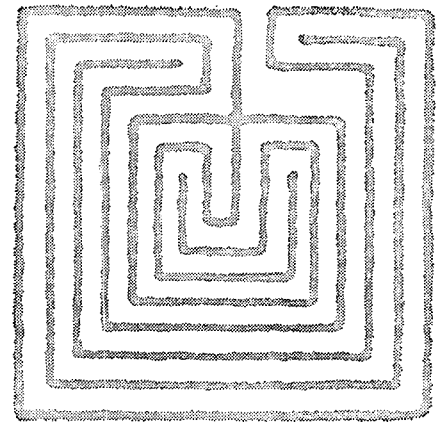

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Excerpts from Conference II

Having heard so much criticism of the condition of the humanities in the first conference, we were surprised to hear one of the participants contend early in the second conference that he was not at all "uneasy" about the humanities. Leonard Meyer, professor of music at the University of Chicago, went on to say: "Our times in general are uneasy; I do not see that the humanities are particularly unique in this. . . . In the earlier conference, people talked about specialization. I have no objection to specialization; it is bound to happen. There will always be a lot of small progress. One does not expect Einsteins in science every day. There is a tremendous amount produced in every field that will lay the groundwork for those who come after. Most fields today are made up of countless John the Baptists in hairshirts. Our sense of crisis stems largely from the pluralism of our society, but this unease is related to the expectation that society should, in fact, be linear and nonpluralistic. Pluralism does not produce conflict unless the expectation is for unity. Once one recognizes pluralism as the dominant fact of our society, the ability to live with and understand and appreciate the divergent ideologies is not necessarily a source of unease." These remarks provided an excellent point of departure for the conference.

MARX

I would agree with Mr. Meyer's point that things are "good" in the humanities, but for the very opposite reasons. Things have been good in the classroom for me this year precisely because the crisis is so grave. I am speaking now of the grave external crisis in our society with which the students are more directly involved than we are.

There is a reason why that crisis is good for humanists, and it is illustrated in the piece called "A Memorandum on Youth" which Erik Erikson wrote for the *Dædalus* issue "Toward the Year 2000." He places today's young people on a spectrum with the accommodators, whom he calls "technological youth," at one pole and the nonaccommodators at the other. The technological youth are those who are willing to leave it to the system, who can identify with the system, who have a sense of purpose and meaningfulness within the system. The nonaccommodators are the dissatisfied, rebellious

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youth, including the very militant and nihilistic. Erikson gropes in the article for a name for the nonaccommodators and finally he says we might call them "humanist youth."

I found extremely revealing the distinction between the technological youth who are pleased and satisfied to "know what they are doing" and the humanist youth who want even more to "mean what they are saying." As a teacher of literature, I find that when I have enough students in my classes who want to connect the meaning of what they read with the meaning of what they can say, I have a perfect situation for teaching. It is a striking fact that this year with the great pressures of the draft and crisis in America there has been a superb teaching situation. The technique is for the teacher to be aware of the students in a way that will allow him to convey the relevance of his work without in any way denying its integrity.

On the day after the King assassination, I found myself trying to teach Henry James. With a sense of how irrelevant "The Beast in the Jungle" might seem to these deeply upset students, I had to worry about why it was important on that day for them to pay attention to Henry James. I had the best session on Henry James that I have ever had *because* I had to worry so and, in one sense, I wish that I could have that situation every time I teach Henry James. The external crisis is our great opportunity because the nonaccommodating, dissatisfied students really are looking for what we have always had to offer. They are the humanists looking for an alternative to the technological society—an alternative that is implicit in the whole history and method of the humanities. It is up to us to lend substance to that alternative, which is what I mean when I speak of relevance.

BLAU

To return to Leonard Meyer's original remark, it seems to me that if we have learned nothing else from the sometimes devastating research of contemporary art into the history of the last several hundred years, it is that transfigured joy, not despair, comes from uneasiness and crisis. I feel very much as Leo Marx does that our students are forcing us to be uneasy and to develop a social sense of self-definition. I do not think that this is cause for despair at all; rather, it is a source of remarkable new energy.

When I spoke yesterday about the eloquence of young people, I was speaking of a very special occasion. Eloquence is some *momentary* excision of the distance between principle and practice: Suddenly someone performs at the level of his own deepest conviction. I do not think all students are eloquent by any means.

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Eloquence only occurs when we really feel we have captured something that is no longer a posture.

This generation of young people is perhaps the first that has ever taken in absolute dead earnestness the idea that all the world is a stage. They are dedicated to the principle of metamorphosis that is central to many of the works we teach. In a sense, this is much like the Chinese actor who, in testing out the capacities of his own nature, puts on a mask to summon up new energies. That mask in a way controls him. The students have been quite willing to fulfill a discipline, and they expect the same from us when we stand in front of the class in our role as teacher. Ours is a particular mask, and we are expected to summon up—from within—the energy to correspond with that mask. I think that is essentially what Leo Marx means when he talks about teaching being relevant.

We who have talked about relevance are really not disinclined to pay tribute to the nature of our particular disciplines. Substance counts. Jim Ackerman said that he would take for granted that we are all citizens as well as specialists. I would take for granted that we are all specialists as well as citizens. It seems to me that the discipline itself, and not just the students, is asking that certain aspects of its own nature be truly exigent at this moment in time. From where do we derive our principles ultimately? We derive our principles from the works that we study, and it seems to me that there is an enormous incompatibility between the way we perform in a classroom, the way we perform in life, and the things we are teaching the student. It is unrealistic to think that what we teach in the classroom can be separated from the environment in which that learning is taking place. In Chicago, for example, kids undertaking humanistic studies can hardly walk outside the environment of their studies without fear of mutilation in the neighborhood. This is a serious problem that teachers must deal with.

We may still be interested in recovering history, but the students are not. There is a whole series of studies which the students are interested in and to which our curricula pay no attention. They are interested in the emancipation of the body through things like dance, yoga, swimming, mountain climbing. When we talk about relevance, we are facing the need to reconceptualize the way we teach and what constitutes a curriculum.

MARX

Some black students in my class came to me and complained that so few black writers are represented in my course in American literature. My first answer was the standard one that there are not enough good black writers. They immediately asked what I meant

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by good writers. Suddenly I realized how much our very definition of what constitutes a "good" writer is culture-bound and influenced by an array of extra-literary considerations. These people are raising the kinds of issues that one might expect to be raised by graduate students, but seldom are because graduate students tend not to be interested in these sorts of things. The graduate student is too preoccupied with his career.

Our volume of *Dædalus* ought to try to disentangle professional integrity from careerism and to make some kind of a distinction. The great corruption in our field tends to be the confusion of the two. In graduate study in English literature relevance comes in at the point where we consider why some books live and some die. Presumably they die because they stop speaking to people, and that is another way of talking about relevance. How is the canon formed? What is the process by which some works continue to be taught and read and others do not?

CHISOLM

The plea for black writers in literature courses raises the fundamental question of whether part of graduate training ought to equip people to re-examine the presuppositions of the field. It is probable that we have smuggled into our categories of social analysis conditions from white European matrices which have skewed our notion of what constitutes evidence, what has priority, and so forth. Perhaps graduate students should look at their field as a whole and try to imagine the implicit presuppositions of the enterprise. This should be done critically as a continuing seminar engaging the best senior people as well.

STEVENSON

Would you be using these black writers as universities do when they appoint Negroes? It is usually thought that you cannot get Negroes who are so good as other people; you appoint them not because they are the best people available, but as a social gesture. As long as it is done in that spirit, I see it, but could you actually introduce those writers into your course on literary grounds?

MARX

I teach the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin,* but I do not teach the *Autobiography of Frederick Douglass.* Is it purely for literary reasons? If it is for literary reasons, are those standards absolute? Is W. E. B. DuBois's book *The Souls of Black People* inferior by literary standards? I doubt it. I think that the literary standards

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are themselves determined by cultural presupposition, and it is perfectly conceivable that black writing is, by some other measure, equally valuable. The prevailing assumption in the academic literary Establishment is that our aesthetic standards are universal.

STEVENSON

Is your faculty making a distinction between aesthetic, literary, and social standards?

MARX

We are questioning those aesthetic standards.

O'HARE

The immediate motivation of the black student who demands black writers in American literature is the self-consciousness that recent events have inspired. He realizes that in American society being black is not analogous to being Jewish, Italian, or anything else. Black is very special. Do we or do we not believe this? The question of whether to teach the *Autobiography of Frederick Douglass* certainly involves literary merit; but when you come to teach, for example, Northern Renaissance art, you choose the best paintings you have and you talk about them. We do not demand that they be as good as Italian paintings of the same period.

The point is that black literature, black self-consciousness, black power, and the whole question of black culture in America should be studied with the best artifacts available for their own sake. How do we find what the best is? None of us is good at that because we simply do not have contact with the black culture. This is why they want to appoint black professors. It is not because black men should get jobs, but because *our* whole lives have been spent acquiring critical tools that simply are not useful in appreciating a piece of American history that we have all let go by the wayside. You see, Professor Marx, if you teach the *Autobiography of Frederick Douglass,* your course will not be the same as one taught by a black professor whose education is not nearly so good as yours by the standards we usually apply. This is the important message that the black students want to get across to the university. Discussing quality at this point is futile.

MARX

I agree with everything you say except your point about teaching black literature for its own sake. We teach the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* not because of literary criteria, but because it

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is so representative of attitudes that are dominant in our culture. The very fact that the *Autobiography of Frederick Douglass* does not meet the built-in literary standards of the white culture may tell us something about the white culture. The very way he writes and his position as a slave may tell us something of crucial importance about American life. It is not just important for its own sake.

CHISOLM

It seems to me that the challenge is a much more fundamental one. A hypothesis is proposed by the advocates of black studies that challenges all our theories of universalism. That knowledge and procedure in white-dominant European culture are skewed is illustrated by the history of the analysis of black lives in the United States and around the world. A critique is now mounted of the fundamental assumptions of a social science in which the existence of a black community is not even imagined on integral terms, in which the writing about blacks in America is listed under "race relations." Only now are we entertaining the hypothesis that there is a black community that is sufficiently integral to constitute a culture—with unique forms of art, music, dance, writing, and history—and a valid comparative field of study for white-dominant culture.

KAUFMANN

We are talking about our vaunted self-consciousness as if somehow you should trust the teller rather than the tale. This effort at a comprehensive self-consciousness can be viewed as a lateral refraction of imperialism. It is essentially a security device. We have insisted and re-insisted on our virtual omniscient capacity for self-identification, self-description, and so on. We have wooed ourselves into the belief that somehow what we have intended is true. This is not true at all. Part of what I think of as the disquietude of this group is that we have been exposed recently in a whole series of pressing encounters in the international and domestic spheres. James was cited earlier, but remember he wanted to be one of those people "on whom nothing was lost," a kind of mandate, we all felt.

It is quite clear that we do not have any justification for looking upon ourselves as fully qualified, detached, completely objective observers, or anything close to it. Now a lot of people are insisting not only that they want the right to do their own observing, but that we have deluded ourselves. A great many of the things we are talking about can be returned to this common focus with some profit.

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We have the notion that there is something salutary in conscientiously introducing students to the real complexities of issues, trying to show them how to construct configurations and relationships, and measure the weight of each of these; it is partly what we mean by being responsibly intelligent. I certainly do not disapprove of that. If I did, I would unavoidably be in absolute opposition to my own trained nature. On the other hand, a lot of the students have a different notion. They think that this method is a dispersion. They see in it the hesitancy to make very strong qualitative assertions, and I cannot be completely unsympathetic with them. I do not think this is just a question of student psychology or a question about the state of our own psyche. This is an immediate concern with very practical questions of how to teach and how to allocate our own energies. It comes right back again to Jim Ackerman's question about how we want to train our own successors and what we want to learn from them.

WEISINGER

I want to revert to what Michael O'Hare said because it is characteristic of what young people are saying to us. I agree with the statement, but I disagree violently with the conclusion that only a Negro can teach Negro literature because only he has the feeling for it. This is precisely what we are reacting against and trying to avoid. I can only illustrate it by a personal story. In the 1930's when I tried to be a graduate student in English, I was told that I could not because a Jewish boy from Brooklyn was not born to the understanding of English literature which came naturally to certain classes of people in certain circumstances. I am not inventing this. You are saying the same thing. If we as humanists cannot vicariously participate in the experience of others, allowing for the moment an ignorance that may be overcome, then the whole humanistic enterprise is doomed from the very outset.

O'HARE

I did not say that we cannot understand black culture; just that we cannot see the whole picture. The particular tradition in which you are a scholar provides a set of tools by which you can reach English literature; those particular tools are not much good for Chinese poetry. The mere idea that black culture is a subject is such a new one that we do not have this traditional expertise yet. In any case, wouldn't you welcome almost any literate Elizabethan Englishman—out of a time machine, say—as a valuable addition to your English department?

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Let me clarify my point: There are aspects of black culture, as exemplified by its artifacts, that a white man simply will not be able to transmit to his students. There is a difference between the blacks and whites that is not the same as the difference between all the other cultural groups that have gone to make up the American scene. The chasm is much more difficult to bridge. There is a place for teaching black culture. There could be no Beatles without black music, for example. You can only get a glimpse of the Beatles if you learn something about where their music came from, but the significance for us of the influence of black music on the Beatles is very different from the significance for black people of the influence of black music on John Coltrane.

MEYER

I do not see, logically, how you can say that, being white. There is a serious problem. If you deny the possibility of communication in literature, then how do you admit communication by other verbal (or musical or plastic) means?

BLAU

I think we are engaging in a classic self-deception. We do not need to justify the introduction of black literature into American literature courses on aesthetic grounds. Although I think the question of quality is a serious one when we try to reconceive standards, we are missing the point here. We have left something out of history; it is quite clear. Feed it back in again. We are trapped somewhere between what has failed to happen in our discipline and what has failed to happen in our society.

D'ARMS

The problems we are confronting here as humanists and the crisis in which we find ourselves in some ways represent the accomplishments of a type of humanism that has spanned the last fifty years. Since World War I logical positivism has replaced metaphysics. The literature of disillusion and debunking that followed World War I has become incorporated into the literary canon as a standard point of view. Literature has also concerned itself with other segments of society. *Studs Lonigan*, for example, is the prototype of many things that are being written about today. In history there have been extreme forms of relativism and an anti-historicism within the profession itself. Since World War II social anthropology and the study of other cultures have become more or less humanistic subjects. This may be responsible for some of the self-consciousness of the Negro and his desire to study his own culture.

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Can it be that the crisis represents the success of what the humanists have been doing for the past fifty years? Earlier this week the head of the French department at a university where I was visiting said to me: "I don't know why I should be surprised at what has happened here with my students. For the last fifteen years I have been teaching Sartre, Camus, and the rest." Perhaps all this just represents the fact that the message has got across.

MARX

The humanities, when taken seriously, provide people with a chance to speak critically of a culture. The materials we deal with create a false consciousness when they merge with the mass-produced stereotypical culture which we are trying to help our students escape. We have not talked about the way in which the humanities become oppressive when they become part of the mass-produced culture.

In literary circles in recent years there has been bewilderment as well as irritation because students are so excited about literary criticism. Many are willing to read literary criticism, but show little interest in reading literature. The best way to explain this rather perplexing phenomenon is that literary criticism today is a rather sensitive, clearly defined, articulate vocabulary for making value discriminations which are not available in most other fields and often not even available in the teaching of literature. Many teachers of literature do not know how to do this, so the students read criticism, and it is really a substitute for what used to be called moral philosophy or political wisdom. I find students love to read literary criticism because it gives them a chance to see how people arrive at judgments of value. Of course, if we were doing our job well, this should happen when they read poems and novels directly.

COLES

When I read Faulkner as an undergraduate, I got out of his novels some understanding of what he was about and was trying to do. I could understand better some of his political positions, and I was much less angry and intolerant and much less the smug New Englander telling *him* what position *he* should take. But beyond that, I did not get from him, until I went to Mississippi, something that helped me as a witness, a witness to what he had lived with every day of his life. Faulkner had a sense of humor about his own world—which is what we were talking about in reference to work and play—and this can be taught. It is not just a matter of what his personal characteristics as a novelist are. The danger one can

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run by teaching in this manner is to make the reading of Faulkner's novels a sociological study of Mississippi or psychoanalytic study of Faulkner himself.

KIRCHNER

I do not believe that Mr. Cole or Mr. Martin implied in their remarks on the workshop that if you were involved in the act of "doing" as exemplified in the arts, you would thereby and forever perform appropriately under all circumstances. They are talking about a sharpening of the intellectual (and scholastic) process as a consequence of "doing"—about the inseparability of thought and action, about the increase in relevance of theory when motivated by an intimate experiential understanding of practice.

Mr. Stevenson views this subject from another perspective when he implies that good stories well told are absorbing and meaningful and that when a child asks "what are you telling this story for?" there must be something wrong with the story. Certainly Leo Steinberg and Jim Kaufmann have demonstrated here that they are good storytellers, and yet this does not seem to be enough. Our students are questioning *in toto* the relevance of our stories. (As in Vietnam: We have been told endlessly by our chief storytellers that we are winning the war, and yet we read as recently as this morning that our casualty lists are greater than ever.) Students ask with increasing vehemence: "What are you telling the story for?" We cannot deny that our stories and their relationships are being subjected to an increasing barrage of questions.

I think we could postulate all sorts of rules and characteristics which would make for a distinguished citizenry (and for the university which rears the citizenry). But it would be foolhardy to construct a check list and predict the "success" of a society of individuals with the appropriate specifications. For one thing, the specifications change too rapidly, and, for another, we simply do not know *entirely* what makes a good citizen or the complex interactions which make good citizenry possible even for those on the approved list.

Rules are necessary. With a proper understanding of rules, we can construct models from which invaluable information may be inferred. But we must understand that the adequacy of a rule is entirely dependent upon highly refined and sensitive observation, and given an adequate rule, we must also understand that the variables are difficult to "cover."

Some time ago a distinguished musician wrote an interesting and scholarly thesis on precisely this subject. He examined similar parts of hundreds of compositions written in the Renaissance,

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Baroque, and classical periods. He discovered that in about 90 per cent of the examples observed the compositions "followed the rules." He also found that in about 10 per cent, the rules were broken and that 90 per cent of the "great composers" were in that 10 per cent area. All of this must, of course, be taken with a grain of "wisdom." "Rules," I am sure, can be devised to describe the 10 per cent as well as the 90 per cent areas. The important thing is that grasping a fact by describing it (which is what most rules are about) does not necessarily mean that we have *understood* the phenomenon or object of our research.

Take a Shakespearean play. It is replete with subtle historical allusion, recondite psychological insight, complex superstructures, and so forth. Now imagine the gradual deletion, one by one, of these allusions and insights. At some point even a nonsophisticate, thoroughly unfamiliar and seemingly insensitive to these recondite areas, will walk out, thinking the play a bore, a shadow of life. The relationship between personal and substantive information is most complex; certain elements can be divined only in the process of "doing"—rules are inadequate in this area.

Perhaps I can best explain this by examples from my own field. Along with the history of music (musicology), there are also other areas of importance: *analysis, composition,* and *performance.* (In some instances all three areas have been experienced by the historian to an extent.) It is possible to be a fine analyst without experiencing composition and performance. One can categorize, inventing subtle terminology and even systems that ostensibly describe the various features.

If we should ask our musical analyst to write an "ordinary" composition utilizing the object of his research as a model (Haydn, Mozart, or Schubert), he would find that his analysis of the work, though helpful, did not prepare him for the task. In the process of writing or learning to write this "ordinary" composition, he learns that there are "analytic" levels which he has completely overlooked. His way of looking at the composition is changed, and the features themselves are now viewed from a different vantage point. His analysis has fallen short of the realities he must face in the process of duplication. Another level of comprehension emerges as a result of his labor.

Should we now ask our analyst-composer to *perform* the object of his researches, it would soon be apparent to him that even beyond the ordinary technical equipment necessary to accomplish this "performance," there are projective problems which require insight necessary to go beyond what the symbols on the page seem to reveal. Composers cannot describe the totality of their musical experience. The musical symbols are essentially a coded means to

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"show the way." The ordering of these symbols is so intricate and structured that an infinite number of performances can be obtained which reveal the conception of the composer. Analysis and composition are enormously helpful and, in fact, bring "depth and vision" to performance, yet these projective problems tap a source of intimate and personal knowledge most difficult to define. "Life experience" plays an important role. The interplay between subject and object, the subtle observation and recording of events, the reaction to situations of the most diversified nature—all of these come into play in the projection of symbols into meaningful sound. With the experience of performance yet another level of comprehension emerges, modifying to an important extent this understanding.

The historian need not become an accomplished composer or performer, yet his real experience in these realms is undeniably of greatest value to the relevance of his research.

The balance of these areas in my own field is, to say the least, inadequate and unfortunately results with some exceptions in increasing amounts of irrelevant scholarship. I am sure this is true in other fields.

KAHN

For all of us today the excitement threshold has been escalated. We no longer respond to a lot of things that other generations responded to simply because they are not interesting enough. It seems to me that one reason we would rather read literary criticism than the original work is because that is where the action is. In literary criticism, you have competing value systems making their claims felt. At that point you feel that you might possibly find some way out of the morass; you find yourself dealing more clearly in modern terms if you are reading Leslie Fiedler on Mark Twain rather than *Huckleberry Finn.* He is telling you something about yourself living in America at this moment in relation to values that existed at the time when Mark Twain wrote the book. He is helping you to define yourself. When you are in front of a class of students, you are not going to teach somebody else's criticism just to keep the action at a certain excitement level, although that might be an interesting way of teaching the humanities today. Rather than teaching *Huckleberry Finn,* teach Fiedler; rather than reading Hawthorne, read *Studies in Classical American Literature* by D. H. Lawrence, which speaks much more to the immediacy of our living than Hawthorne does. But we really do not want to teach just literary criticism. We want to incarnate the outside conflicts in our own classroom. We want to reach the point where the

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outside and the inside meet, where the students feel that there is no question of relevance. How can we do this?

In a lot of cases students are upset with us because they do not know our position in terms of outside events. We are constantly mediating between competing currents, and that is not interesting or necessary now. Right now it is more exciting, and it enables the students to identify who we are, if we are committed to a current. It is necessary at this time to identify competing ideological systems and values, so that the student can take his place more intelligently in the spectrum. If we cannot be artists standing, through our work, for a contemporary current, then as humanists we certainly must know what is going on because it is in the definition of our work to relate our inherited or acquired notions of quality. Our notions belong to another generation, but there is a tension in relating them to the most contemporary manifestation in the arts; it is by doing this that we define our ideological position and give ourselves an identity that the student can understand. If that identity means that we absolutely insist on being fuddy-duddys, at least then we are a boulder in the road that the student has to stub his toe against in order to continue on. But to be wishy-washy, to try to mediate, to act as though the problems did not exist, gets the students hot under the collar.

STEINBERG

Regarding the distinction that came up between criticism and creative work: Leo Marx reports that students of English literature now seem to prefer reading criticism and commentary to the reading of literature. To explain this perversity he suggests that modern criticism, in its concern with value discriminations, has become a substitute for moral philosophy. Eric Martin then warns against the process of "endless evaluation" that results from "reading criticism instead of reading the original work"—substituting the secondhand for the firsthand experience "that presumably is present in the novel." There seems to be a general idea here that the activities of making things and of commenting on man-made things are primary and secondary activities respectively, and that the primary is by definition superior.

I am reminded of a passage in a Michelangelo letter of March 1547. Michelangelo, the amateur poet, thanks his correspondent for the text of Benedetto Varchi's commentary on one of his sonnets. "The Sonnet is indeed by me, but the commentary is from heaven," he writes; he continues: "As regards the Sonnet, I know it for what it is worth, . . . but I cannot pretend that I do not feel a little vainglorious in being the subject of so fine and learned a commentary."

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I used to read these lines as pure irony, but I no longer feel certain that I read them right. In a more recent artist or poet, such an expression would surely seem barbed; but Michelangelo was still close enough to a millennial tradition—that of Europe's religious culture—in which commentary, I mean Bible commentary, of course, was the supreme intellectual enterprise. Some years ago I experienced the extraordinary impact of this tradition when a certain seventeenth-century painting led me to study the subject of Christ in the House of Martha and Mary, to see how that incident—told in five verses in St. Luke—had been traditionally understood. The Gospel text tells how Jesus, while speaking to Mary, is interrupted by Martha's complaint that her sister is not helping her in the kitchen. Christ responds with the words: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the better part which shall not be taken away from her." The translations vary since both the Latin and Greek texts allow many readings. My problem then was to trace what Christians from the third century to the seventeenth had thought or said about these Bible verses. And I discovered that there is hardly a better way to find out about domestic life in Patristic times, or about rules of hospitality in the Middle Ages, than through the shifting interpretations of those cryptic words. And while so much of medieval literature is other-worldly—fantastical, allegorical, or scholastic—I was astonished to find how much serious thought on the psychology of women, for instance, was embodied in those commentaries. It almost confirms the provocative remark of Wolf Kahn that "we would rather read literary criticism than the original work because that is where the action is." You might say that for over a thousand years, the vital, exciting "action" was not in the Bible, but in Bible commentary. It was there that you made your discoveries and defined yourself and your values.

My reason for dragging Bible interpretation into our discussion is simply my sense of the reality of content. We tend to speak of the relative worth of creation and commentary as such, but it seems to me to make quite a difference what it is that is being created or commented on. Many art departments in American colleges that combine studio and history courses must surely be experiencing what I constantly see in New York: While one man's observations on the symbolic structures of, say, Rubens or Michelangelo keep him aware of the artist's confrontation with love and power and death and the self, his creative colleagues may be engaged in the problems of minimal art, in achieving a man-made non-symbol of total opacity. Criticism, commentary, and the study of historical art—they are, among other things, ways of keeping open the approaches to areas of human experience to which the operations

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of contemporary art do not at this moment give access. The invidious distinction so often made between creation and criticism can be merely another surrender to formalism.

MARX

Dr. Coles' comments about Faulkner helped me to understand something I want to say about criticism. We have the student who reads criticism instead of the works; we have the student who is made to confront the work; and we have the maker himself. For the moment, I want to leave out the maker, because I do not deal with him. While I understand and sympathize with the students who use criticism as a sort of surrogate moral philosophy, I am alarmed by this, not because the work sometimes may be less immediately relevant to them than the criticism, but because it is up to us to make them see the relevance of the work. It is not a question of reading Fiedler on *Huckleberry Finn* or *Huckleberry Finn.* It is a question of a teacher being able to present the work in the context of today. If the critics can help him, fine. But one of the great differences between criticism and the work is that criticism is abstract and wholly intellectualized, and response to a work of art involves emotion. To teach a work of literature in such a way that the student is able to experience the work and to make his own judgment is far more difficult than to teach him to appreciate criticism.

It is absolutely essential that we not forget that works of art are structures of thought and feeling. When a student makes a judgment in the presence of a complex work of art, the experience is an intense, involved, difficult one in which he discovers the possibility of autonomy. He does not discover the possibility of autonomy by moving critical jargon around. We have brought up all the standing polarities here today—form and content, art and society, and so on—and the one that is now missing is obviously thought and feeling. I would like that to be on the agenda.

MEYER

Every act of teaching is in some sense an act of criticism, just as every act of analysis is an act of criticism. The teacher takes something that he has experienced as a value and tries to make it into a value for his students.

The importance of criticism is related to the explosion of works of art that Father Ong spoke about in his paper. Students are turning to criticism, in part, because they are confronted with a multiplicity and diversity of styles and theories. They need some guidelines, and this is what both the critic and the teacher give.

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One comment on what Wolf Kahn said about the teacher having to be committed to an ideology. This is something that the artist has to do, but it is not the humanist's function. The humanist's—the intellectual's—function, as I tried to say in my paper, is to live with uncertainty rather than to make committed decisions. I can see that the artist has to be committed; a painter cannot be of two minds about the problem of style. But a critic, which is what a teacher is in a sense, is good precisely when he is of two minds.

BLAU

Earlier the interesting distinction was made between analysis and performance. There is a distance that remains unanalyzed between what people are capable of doing when they look at art objects and what they are capable of doing when they perform. That distinction prevails in every area that we have discussed. It has transferred itself to pedagogy and to the problems that we have talked about in relation to society.

While I do not pretend to be a Shakespearean scholar in any definitive sense, I do know the scholarship. Nonetheless, all the notes that accumulate in the margins of my text when I teach Shakespeare are of little importance when I have to produce one of the plays, and I confront again that actor who says this is a great idea you have about the play, but how is it performed? The students are asking that question in practically every area. After I have produced a Shakespearean play, whether it is a good performance or a bad one, I return to my own notes, founded upon all the scholarship that I had at my disposal, and I find them incredibly naïve. This is true of the greatest scholarship I know.

O'HARE

You just cannot talk about a work of art by itself. Once you have read Ernest Jones, there is no *Hamlet* without Ernest Jones. When you start to consider *Hamlet* for what it is worth, there is *Hamlet* plus the accretion of what you have read of Ernest Jones, what you have retained of your courses on Shakespeare, what Bradley said, and so on. You may find it wrong ultimately, but it is still there affecting you.

We think it appropriate and fruitful to write a critical study of *Hamlet* because it is a piece of great art, but what about painting a critical study of a can of beans? What about Morandi, who spent his life painting critical studies of a very few bottles? In a sense the paintings are to the bottles as a book about Morandi is to the paintings. I am not trying to sound like a mystic when I propose that there is an essential unity to the phenomena.

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KAUFMANN

Goethe said: "Beware of what you long for in your youth for you will surely achieve it in middle age." There is a lot to that, and much of what we have said is traceable to a feeling that we have been successful according to the format and design that were given us. There is no self-congratulation in that, nor does there need to be a prescriptive statement. A certain kind of direction was given us, some of it good, some of it bad, but enough to articulate a model of behavior for ourselves that we could modulate in our own way and partially realize. It now occurs to many of us that we are captives of our own virtue and virtuosity, not the other way around. I do not feel at all that I have to ask myself where I went wrong. There is a megalomania in that which forecloses the vistas in every direction beyond our own claim.

A conscientious study of the history of the last two hundred years teaches me that the crisis we are now suffering has been in the making for two hundred years. Indications have emerged and have been suppressed. I do not find much of what is happening in our own time confusing at all. I find it dismaying, but not confusing. I wonder when we project guilt if we are not asking whether we have enough resiliency to make our energies, our skills, and our behavior follow our diagnostic intelligence. I see a lot of things that we can do. I have been stimulated particularly by the ardor of the response to what Leon Kirchner said. To me it was the most moving and profound thing said so far, and it is something I am going to think about a great deal. It would be wrong if we tried, in the face of the current situation, to close our discussions as if we had certain theorems under which to reduce everything we have said to one another. That would be a way of appeasing the temptation to think through some of our own assumptions. It would be a confirmation that we have achieved what we longed for in our youth and are now contained by it.

MARX

This question interests me. Recently I read through as much as I could find of radical student propaganda. It may be an occupational disability, but I believe in taking their own rhetoric seriously. I want to read a couple of sentences. This is Mario Savio, December 3, 1964, Berkeley, California: "The time has come to put our bodies on the machine and stop it." This was the day of the sit-in at Sproul Hall. Mark Rudd, May 3, 1968, Open Letter to President Kirk: "You might not want to know what is wrong with this society, but I'll tell you." He mentioned the black ghettos, the war

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in Vietnam, "our meaningless studies," and he says, all of this adds up "to our revulsion at being cogs in your corporate machine."

I found repeated use of the word "machine" in student writing. It is a cliché in a sense, but one that tells us something. A machine is an almost perfect symbol for a system wherein the individual parts are meaningless except insofar as they contribute to the whole. In their revulsion at the image of incipient authoritarianism, the students are rebelling against anything that smacks of the imposition on material of order from without. They want to start from some other point. When I teach American literature chronologically, they feel it is mechanical. This is why Erikson's "technological and humanist youth" categorization is so revealing. All their images of American life are technological. They are looking for a humanist alternative to a mechanized society. When Herbert Blau says this is our great opportunity, I agree with him. They want us to give them an alternative.

In a casual conversation about architecture that I had the other day with Michael O'Hare, I expressed my feeling that there was some necessity about the way the Prudential Building was built. He said: "No, you could have built a humane structure on that same site." That might be a model for something we ought to do. We could ask what the alternatives are to the way we now do things in various aspects of the humanities. What is the alternative to the chronological structure in a history course, to building the John Hancock the way it is? Is there another way to do it? Part of this machine image is the despair of determinism, of fatalism. It is what Lewis Mumford calls the "myth of the machine."

GRAUBARD

I cannot envisage a humanist alternative to a mechanized society. I can conceive a humanist dimension to a mechanized society in the twentieth century, but not a humanist alternative. A great part of our society, given our technology, is inevitably going to be mechanized, rationalized, whatever you will. If you want to say that it should also contain something that we call a humanist dimension, then I can wholly understand and agree. But if you put it as an alternative, I must say that I find it hard to comprehend.

STEINBERG

If it is true that our students react to the consistent chronological ordering of historical material as to a mechanical model, then they are giving us a welcome challenge, because we are devoted to the material incorporated in these chronological structures. It is what we most cherish and want to share with them. A restructuring of

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the course content—not just once, but as an ongoing process—serves the wholesome function of making us question at every point why we teach what and when. Meanwhile, students will have found out something about their humanities teachers if they sense that our chronological sequences are a mindless, habit-formed medium; and that our decisions as to what shall come next are engendered less by will, imagination, or relevance than by the ticking of time.

Obviously a sequential chronology does correspond to a real dimension of human experience, but only to one among many. And if today's student balks at it because of his changed situation in a mechanistic society, then he is handing us an opportunity. The challenge is to restructure the content so that it does not come with the odium of mechanism. It probably means that all our textbooks will have to be reoriented, and that creates a grand open field for everybody.

ROUSH

The machine image implies questions not only about linear processes, but also about proceduralism. If we are going to give ourselves over with any enthusiasm to whatever the contrary image might be, we should bear in mind what that might entail. The challenge to the machine also involves the challenge to a lot of things which we have in the past held dear, things having to do with due process, civil libertarian notions of academic neutrality, the possibility of a teacher of Classics being a teacher of Classics in one part of his machine-like life and a citizen in another. That challenge is also clearly implicit in the challenge that is being offered by Mario Savio and Mark Rudd. It cannot be answered easily or painlessly.

OHMANN

One reason the students use the "machine" metaphor is that we have a lot of machines around us, and we have a lot of institutions that are organized like machines. We have bigger universities now than we did a hundred years ago. We have a large military establishment to take care of obligations, as we call them, all over the world. These developments make it appropriate to talk in machine imagery.

I do not share the feeling that these are "problems" that we can get beyond if we can only think of a way to solve them within a democratic, pragmatic tradition and that this is only a phase in the development of our culture. What is happening now is minor in

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comparison with what is going to happen in the period we are entering. The only way we can avert chaos is to bring about huge enlargements in the machine. I only wish to underline what Stephen Graubard said about the idea of presenting a humanistic alternative to the machine being simply out of the question.

MARX

So far as I can understand the students, they are not asking for a nontechnological society. They want a society whose rationality is in the service of some discernible human aim as opposed to rationality in the service of a higher irrationality.

WEISINGER

In literature at least, the revolt against chronology and therefore literary history is almost twenty years old. It was certainly not caused by recent events. I might also remind you that the concept of alienation from the machine is a Marxist one and, in fact, probably goes back to Plato. All of us are aware of the faults of the society in which we live, and we do have a responsibility to cry out. The thing that worries me most is that in our desire to overthrow a corrupt regime, we may at the same time overthrow an institution that has become identified, although not necessarily so, with that regime. The problem we have to face, in a way, is how to preserve the academy, which so far as I know is the only body which consistently and traditionally defends the values that we hold dear. My final defense of the humanities is that the deepest, most moving moral defense of socialism that I know is by Oscar Wilde.

COLES

When Erikson speaks about humanist versus technological youth, I take it that his category of technological youth refers to a group that is comfortable with the reigning technology of the era; they do not question it. Perhaps the real question before us is whether we can communicate with *these* students, the ones *not* behind Mark Rudd. I hope our discussion does not deteriorate into an antitechnological diatribe. As Stephen Graubard said, this is one option we do not have; furthermore, nothing would suck us so fast into irrelevance.

O'HARE

I have to spring to the defense of the machine. Machines, electronic devices, and so on offer us an important pedagogical oppor-

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tunity. The argument for a chronological presentation is one of cause and effect. It is a principle we all believe in. Machines do embody vast impersonal forces, but they have been enormously important to me as the most direct way of affecting my circumstances. I can build a gadget that makes my apartment more humid if I find it too dry. I do not have to live with what the environment has given me. Machines open up an enormous number of opportunities.

This brings me back to the question of participation in university education. Doing gives the student an opportunity to learn in a real way that—despite the awesomeness of a world which always seems to be doing things with him— there are opportunities for him to do things back. But you cannot do things in ignorance. The whole preceding discussion raises the question of how we are going to use the humanities to defend ourselves from machines when it should raise the question of how we are going to produce technicians to teach us how to use machines.

MARX

I think we are wasting our time. The machine is a metaphor. May I give a brief elementary lecture on metaphor? The machine is a vehicle, as we would say in literary criticism, for a primary subject which is the system. The students identify certain aspects of the machine with the system and the mode of thought it nurtures. They are not objecting to machines in a literal sense; they are objecting to a system which has borrowed from the machine.

The machine is a system that has no end in view but its own perpetuation. From the students' point of view, the system's end is absurd. They do not agree with where it is going. It is taking them to Vietnam, and they don't like it. They are not against technology; they see the world they live in as an enlarged, institutionalized embodiment of the values of technology. They do not reject technology. These are the kids who love cars, cameras, electronic music. They accept technology. That is not the point.

GRAUBARD

I would like to know if there is not one fundamental disagreement here. At the moment that we assumed that the machine was a metaphor, we assumed in part that it was a metaphor for a rationalized, bureaucratic system. We all know that the rationalized bureaucratic system has led to vast injustice. What we all hope is that somehow we can introduce an additional component into a system which is going to continue to be bureaucratized. This is the point of the

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remarks by Richard Ohmann and Michael O'Hare. Admitting that these things are going to continue, what can we do to introduce the humanistic component into the society?

COLES

And also to reach people who haven't the slightest worry about these things.

GRAUBARD

Exactly. That is why I think Mr. Weisinger's comment about the university is so important. Everyone who has lived in the university knows of its inadequacy; yet to equate the university with some of the other inadequacies of the system and to make it appear repressive in the same way is simply to lose all sense of the correct order of things. I find this looseness worrisome.

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III. The Disciplines

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GERALD F. ELSE

The Old and the New Humanities

THE FOLLOWING pages were written after two frontal attempts to define the humanities *an sich,* or as a whole, had failed. I do not know what the humanities are as a whole, and I do not find the cumulative listing method too enlightening. So I thought something might be gained by trying to define the chief characteristics the humanities have had in the past and the chief purposes they were thought to serve, and then projecting these partial definitions onto our present situation and needs, either as possible guidelines or in the form of questions.

It goes without saying that in this brief essay the problem is enormously—but I hope it is not fatally—oversimplified.

My first premise, then, is that the ancient Classics, the Greek and Roman Classics, *were* the humanities until very recently, indeed even into the twentieth century. And the second premise is that the qualities which gave them that position should somehow be pertinent to our main concern: What are the humanities or what should they be, and what can they do?

There is a residual impression, still widespread in the U.S.A., that the classical humanities were an exclusively verbal study, dominated by an imperious but now obsolete kind of grammar.

This impression is not unjustified. The old humanities were indeed verbal, to such an extent that other sensuous realms were sadly neglected, in school. Music had little place in formal education, the visual arts as such none at all. Yet language was not the be-all and end-all of the old humanities, at least in their best periods. I will assert that they had three modes or points of impact, each with its own educational purpose: First, they worked in and through *language,* aiming to develop educated taste; second, they worked with and on *the mind,* aiming to develop educated judgment and persuasiveness; and third, they operated

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in and upon *the whole man*, aiming to make him a moral person and a responsible citizen or political leader—in other words, a free man.

Thus the medium was language, but the chief aims (not the only ones) were intellectual, moral, and political—or rather moral-political, because the old humanities acknowledged no real break between "moral" and "political."

The true purpose of the linguistic side of the old enterprise was not to inculcate grammatical rules, but to educate the student to read, write, and speak with clarity and grace. More specifically, the aim was to civilize a passel of barbarians through and in the use of language. That was the job in Rome in the third to the first century B.C., and again in northern Europe at various times from the fourth to the nineteenth century A.D.

The two languages used as media of humanistic study were chosen not because of their status as living languages—which they were not—but for their stylistic virtues and because works of great aesthetic appeal (as well as high moral-political quality) had been written in them. They were pre-eminently literary languages.

The course of study was active, not merely passive. It developed skills as well as appreciations. By the end of it, if not earlier, the student was expected to write and speak Greek and Latin, especially the latter; and the way he was trained to do so ended by giving a permanent impress to the way he used his own language. The whole development of English and French, perhaps even of German, verse *and* prose bears massive witness to this irreversible influence.

The works studied were, with few exceptions, highly polished examples of conscious literary art. They were specimens—admired and imitated specimens—of formal "beauty." Beauty was the enticement to the whole operation; sometimes it was admitted to be the honey smeared on the cup, to commend a bitter but healthful draught to the drinker.

Two developments in particular have brought about, it seems to me, profound changes in this situation: the extension of the humanities to include more and more and more—potentially, all—languages and literatures, and the rise of linguistics.

The inclusion of many languages inevitably leads to dispersion of effort and loss of contact between teachers and researchers in different humanistic fields. More important is the effect on the student. The old humanities represented selection, concentration,

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and community: a common, shared experience of a limited canon of great works in two languages. A good part of the educational efficacy of these works, seen in the large, rested on the fact that all educated men (in the West, that is: from Italy to Iceland) had had this common experience and could communicate with one another on the basis of it.

The inclusion of many languages and literatures means a great opening up of the lens not only in space and time, but in character and quality. Works get included not because they are excellent, but because they are "representative" or "characteristic." When this broadening is combined with the American obsession with newness, it is in danger of becoming a flattening: American literature since Dreiser and Hemingway, French literature since Sartre and Camus. For the cultivation of a certain taste, we substitute an awareness of the enormous diversity of human tastes and interests.

The rise of linguistics in this country, as an independent and influential discipline, belongs to the last twenty-five years. Its effect on the teaching of foreign languages and indirectly, through that, on the teaching of foreign literatures in their own languages is already great and steadily increasing. It tends to reinforce the concentration on the here and now: the living language as it is currently spoken, the literature that is being written in it now.

The primary emphasis in the teaching of foreign languages in the U.S. is on speaking and reading the current language. In neither case is there any emphasis on positive use of language for artistic purposes. I am not aware that any American school or college attempts to train the student in French in the ways that French students are trained to use their own tongue.

Although there is no necessary antinomy between linguistics and humanistic goals or stylistic refinements, many American linguists have in fact urged their public to "Leave your language alone" and expressed hostility toward any linguistic style more elaborate than that of simple oral communication by simple people.

Thus, the trend of the times is, on the one hand, to broaden the scope of humanistic education to include a wider and wider range of languages and literatures; but, on the other hand, to limit it to present-day speech and literature and to restrict the student's efforts, outside learning the desired foreign accent and idiom, to a passive command of the target language and "appreciation" of its literature.

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Under the old humanistic education, the student did not merely learn a pair of dead languages; he was trained actively to *use* the classical languages, and later on to use his own, for reasoning and persuasion—in other words, for logical and rhetorical ends. (We may recall that the trivium consisted of grammar, logic, and rhetoric.) The medium was language, but it was subjected to a rational discipline for a rational end. Such intellectual training as most students received was imparted through language and exerted upon others through language, in the form of argument, inference, persuasion.

In the modern American educational system, training in reasoning and persuasion, if offered at all, is given in the marginal and partial form of high school debate—an exercise which I believe is on the decline nowadays and which in any case never enlisted more than a small fraction of the student body. One might maintain perhaps that some of this function is now served by the new-style high school science courses. If so, this would be a case of science performing a humanistic function.

It may be that the need for reasoned persuasion, which bulked so large in the ancient democracies and in the beginnings of our own national life, has now lapsed or is served by the professionals of Madison Avenue. In any case, I see no evidence of public awareness that it has anything to do with the humanities.

The old humanistic training in logic and argument was not given in a vacuum and was not literary in the usual sense of that word. It was embodied in literary texts, but the center of gravity was not in literature, *belles lettres* as such, but in moral-political issues. The target was not *l'homme moyen sensuel,* but *homo politicus,* and the central authors were not, for example, Propertius and Ovid, but Cicero and Virgil (the Virgil of the *Aeneid*), because they provided the best definition of the duties of man in society, man responsible for his society, man guiding the destinies of his society. In Northern Europe especially, and our Anglo-Saxon corner of it, it is notable how the center tended to be occupied not by poets but by orators, political philosophers, and historians.

Our American founding fathers did not need to be told that the primary bent and burden of the humanistic tradition was political. They cited Aristotle, Polybius, Cicero *et al.* as serious witnesses for and against federal government, a senate, popular suffrage, and so on. But when they thought "political," they also

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thought "moral," for they could not conceive of a political order that was not built on moral foundations. "Political" was the public side of "moral"; "moral" was the individual side of "political." From the old humanities, allied with Christian religion, they derived a system of rights and duties that could underpin an independent, sovereign nation. We have now lived on that moral-political capital for nearly two hundred years.

Modern studies of classical antiquity tend to stress anything and everything rather than the moral-political nexus. The present trends in classical scholarship cannot be taken as a reliable guide to either the past or the present value of the classical humanities for us. And the same can be said, by and large, of scholarship in the other humanistic fields. We come here upon a difficult and disturbing fact: The impact of the old humanities upon modern life was one thing; the impact—if any—of current scholarship in the humanities upon it is quite another. To put it in a relatively polite and objective way, most scholarship in the humanities is not very humanistic, if measured by the value-oriented old humanities.

It is equally problematical that the focus of the old humanities was upon action—moral and political action—while that in the modern humanities tends to be upon certain quasi-passive modes of feeling and understanding.

Again, the target of the traditional education in humanities was the future ruler or active citizen, while today it is the average —that is, the private—person. Under modern conditions—the free elective system and so forth—we provide no training for the future ruler or the active citizen as such. (We might focus the question by thinking of a future member of Congress.) We would, in fact, consider it undemocratic to do so. And the unusually perceptive or prescient boy who senses that he may end up in Congress, or in some other active political role, will almost certainly not elect philosophy or French literature as a major in college; he will tend toward political science or sociology, or perhaps social psychology.

This tendency points up another fact, and one of major importance: that a significant portion of the area once occupied by the old humanities is now occupied by the social sciences, and that these are constantly trying, with increasing success, to be more scientific. The view which they offer of social and political life has little to do with that which was offered by the old humanities.

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Are the humanities content to end as mere philosophy or mere literature? Do they still aspire to play an active role in preparing students for real life? If so, what role, and which students?

As a general conclusion, I would only say that I am disturbed by the discrepancy between the claims that are made for the humanities from time to time—by the President, in the national Arts and Humanities Act, by commencement orators, and so forth—and the very modest aims that the humanities seem actually to be pursuing. On the one hand, they are touted as our salvation: They are going to give us direction, confidence, purpose, a richer life. On the other, they seem to aspire no higher than to spread before the student a few samples of history or literature—any literature, but preferably close to the year 1969—and train him to a modest command of accent and idiom in one foreign language.

It seems to me that while the humanities still lay claim to the position and the values that were associated with the old, tightly focused humanities curriculum, they are actually taking a diffuse, "democratic," and relatively passive line, trying to be all things to all men. I submit that somehow theory and practice have got to be brought closer together, or the result will be increasing confusion and disillusionment.

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CEDRIC H. WHITMAN

Why Not the Classics? An Old-Fashioned View

I MIGHT begin by saying of the Classics that the Grand Old Lady is not so sick as she is sometimes reported to be. When I am asked if I think there is any hope in twentieth-century America for the study of Greek and Latin, I think of the numberless notices of jobs that have crossed my desk from all over the country. I think, too, of the letters from various colleges and universities announcing the establishment, for the first time, of classical departments or of new graduate programs, and asking help both in manpower and advice about curricula. I think of the flourishing and enthusiastic crop of undergraduates in my own university and of the graduate students, not one of whom, upon completion of his or her studies, fails to find a job, if not always the one wanted. Conversely, I know of many positions which so far it has been impossible to fill. Classical journals abound, and new ones are always being started; classical books, though seldom best-sellers, enjoy remarkably steady sales as long as they are maintained in print. In view of all this, I cannot feel the despair that it is sometimes fashionable to voice. The Classics are not dying; they are reviving to no small degree, and my guess is that the degree will increase.

There are, however, also problems, and these, though less cheering, are perhaps more to the point of this colloquium. I shall confine my remarks to the American scene for the obvious reason that we are more or less in control of it in a way that no gathering of scholars could be in a country where the Classics are still the Establishment. With us, the Classics have never really been the Establishment, though some thinkers, like Jefferson, assumed that they would be. With us, the Classics are a tough native growth, bred of course in European soil, but now having its own species—or better, its own many species. There have always been trends, tastes, and varying approaches to the study of the ancients, and these

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tend to identify themselves to a degree with national groups: The Germans write invaluable, if sometimes interminable, exegetical commentaries; the English justly pride themselves on their textual criticism—*alii alia.* The question is: What are we Americans doing? And the answer is: Practically everything. If I were asked to give a thumbnail sketch of the kind of classical philology which Americans do, I would have to give up, for it runs all the way from the application of neo-criticism to ancient literature to the computer index.

Now this chaotic situation implies that there is no one, or even one prevalent kind of, American classical scholar, and I fervently hope that the chaos continues. But there is always the problem of communication or, better, sympathy. Every form of endeavor in classical studies, provided it be well informed and rendered with clarity, deserves respect: Let the lion of textual criticism lie down with the lamb of the literary essay! But, let me add, it is of neither profit nor interest whether or not, as is unlikely, the textual jackal lies down with the literary goat. Quality, insight, substantive knowledge—these are the tokens of scholarship, and it matters little which of the sub-disciplines they are found in. The literary interpreter cannot do without the historian; the historian cannot do without the archaeologist; the archaeologist cannot do without the epigrapher; the epigrapher cannot do without the grammarian; the grammarian needs reliable texts, which must be established by the textual expert, without whom the literary interpreter, or translator, must wonder whether he is interpreting what his author wrote or not. But the interplay is not a vicious circle; it is an expanding spiral, if well carried out, and the hardest part is to find time to explore the work of colleagues with different interests and knowledge and to understand it. At Boston College a couple of years ago, there was a symposium called the "Knowledge Explosion." We certainly have that problem to face; but the way *not* to solve it is to espouse, say, literary criticism at the expense of traditional philological techniques; or, for that matter, the reverse. As F. A. Wolf said long ago, the basis for a classical scholar's judgment must be *totius antiquitatis scientia*—as far as we can achieve it.

Now, for Wolf, classical studies were the Establishment, for us not. For us, the various sciences, natural or social, form the Establishment; so why the Classics? More broadly, why humanities at all? And what is a humanity? The very term is invidious—invidious because residual: A humanity is everything that is neither a nat-

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ural nor a social science. It was what was left over after the other areas were defined. It does not correspond really to the Roman word *humanitas*, which meant the quality of being a cultivated gentleman, for no Roman gentleman would consider himself cultivated unless he were reasonably abreast of the scientific knowledge of his time. The term is convenient, perhaps, for all its rag-bag look; but it also entails the disservice of setting arts, literature, and philosophy off in a polite but vacuous corner, awkwardly removed from the world that they should penetrate.

How, then, do the various humane disciplines, as represented at this conference, also represent a coherent group? I am not sure that they do, but I feel that they might. May I suggest that two frontier disciplines possibly comprise between them something of a definition; these two disciplines are history and linguistics. The former is usually called a social science; the latter is sometimes looked upon as something akin to mathematics in its keen precision and effort to describe and formulate immutable laws. Yet either, looked at from a certain point of view, could be regarded as the basic "humanity"—history because it studies human action over time and seeks to understand it; its aims, methods, and findings are indispensable, therefore, to all who hope to interpret literature. Yet history got pushed over the fence into social science territory when that term, almost as residual as "humanities," was invented. As for linguistics, in *Prometheus Unbound* Shelley writes, referring to the title character:

> He gave man speech, and speech created thought,
> Which is the measure of the universe.

This fine insight anticipates certain experiments which have shown that "in the sessions of sweet, silent thought" the vocal organs secretly articulate words, and that speech is, in fact, prior to thought. As the late Professor Whatmough put it: "We have known for a long time that people can talk without thinking; what we now know is that they cannot think without talking." So, "In the beginning was the Word," and linguistics, too, as the study of what is presumably humanity's most distinguishing piece of equipment—that is, language creator of thought—might well be regarded as the most fundamental of all humane studies. But it seldom is, even though America and Europe have some highly distinguished linguists whose enviable knowledge of numerous literatures entitles them to no small place in the world of literary criticism.

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I have taken these two disciplines because they are hard to classify precisely, and because both can, at least, and I think should, be classified as humanities. The definition, then, which seems to suggest itself is that the humanities (far from being merely synonymous with the amenities) are less of a clearly bounded area of intellectual effort than they are a state of mind, an open quest for meaning no matter from what quarter it may appear, an all-embracing interest in the human mind at work. Such a definition, if it is one, may seem too broad to have any value; it may be mere fudging. But it points, at least, to a principle which I feel is of great importance: that the humanities must not mark themselves off with high fences and sit behind them in a mood combined of self-satisfaction and resentment at no longer being the Establishment. The true humanist cannot permit himself any narrow prejudice against the sciences. If he does, he dehumanizes his own work, vitiates its basic purpose, and must end in fatal isolation. So, I would invite Sir Isaac Newton, and any other natural scientist, to join the humane huddle, so to speak, as men whose work bears infinite humane reference. After all, Sir Isaac, who knew his pre-Socratic philosophers better than some classicists do, took interest in Anaxagoras' tale that the Nemean Lion fell from the moon, which was populated by much larger and more beautiful beasts than the earth. It is a pity that he never knew of Spectator II, but I am glad that he knew that no piece of tradition is totally worthless, however absurd it may sound.

Now the classicist believes this too, which is perhaps one reason why classical studies, properly conducted, form one of the most embracing of the humanities. To the Classics, all knowledge is humane, if it be seen in the fine lenses of tradition and imagination —tradition because the processes of the past are inevitable to a study that must be historical, imagination because the future needs its own language, which just might "create thought." I began by saying that the Classics, far from being moribund, were showing increasing vigor year by year, and part of the reason, I believe, lies in the tropical abundance and variety of the American concept of classical studies, and the fact that, despite some inevitable, and sometimes amusing, academic sharpshooting, practitioners of the various branches of classical discipline not only give ear to one another's work, but try to make use (or the best) of it. It is encouraging also to see students who take an A.B. in Classics and then go into law, medicine, or the insurance business. This shows

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that our undergraduate training, while, I hope, adequate as pre-professional training, is not exclusively that. It would be a sorry picture if all we did was train professional scholars to train other professional scholars to train other professional scholars—who couldn't talk to anybody. Instead, one of the best Classics undergraduates I ever had now works in an electron accelerator and reads Pindar while the hydrogen bubbles. It is the job of the academic to put well-trained professionals into orbit; but it is also his job to maintain enough communication so that the well-informed and enthusiastic amateur looks back on his classical studies as time spent generously in his own interest, and can continue to think about Pindar, Virgil, or whomever. Einstein used to read Thucydides regularly.

My point, then, that all studies are humane if they are humanely conceived and conducted is, I hope, clear. Classical literature, whether Greek or Roman, has a large claim to the coalition of tradition and imagination mentioned earlier. In the classical literatures there are no violent intellectual breaks, no desperate overturnings of the past. Imagination builds on tradition constantly—as it does today in the natural sciences. But there is an even more important reason why the Classics hold their place. This is their utter impracticality. They exist for their own sake, like all humane studies, and with a special relevance for the individual. Underlying the whole of classical antiquity is the vision of the morally independent individual, existing in many shapes, as changing times demanded, from the Homeric hero to the Stoic citizen of the universe, but always in some form present and paradigmatic. The modern world, with its numberless modes of reducing and regimenting the individual, has created a poignant need for some such cultural stabilizer for the private soul, a need too fundamental to be fully supplied by any of our current recourses, whether psychiatric or psychedelic. But still today, as in the past, the image of man as a moral cosmos strides through the pages of Greek and Roman literature; for that whole great tradition, at its best, circled around striking, towering individuals, men (and sometimes women) who lived in their tradition and tried, after some fashion, to modulate it. They were too wise to try to overturn it, but each had his own way of dealing with it, and sometimes it involved sacrifice. If young people today are looking for ways in which it is possible to be at one with tradition and yet individually independent, they will have a hard time finding better models than among the wayward ancients. The

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Classics can offer some reassurance here that the individual is what counts, the individual who acknowledges society, but is not engulfed by it; who accepts history, but alters it through action. This literature contains not a practical syllable, from the point of view of Herbert Spencer, who thought that education existed to enable a man to make a living. From the point of view of Alfred North Whitehead, who said that a university existed to turn the gifts of a boy into the power of a man, classical studies offer a discipline whose main purpose is neither doing nor having, but being—individual being, but also being among others.

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MICHAEL C. J. PUTNAM

Notes on Classical Studies

THE TEACHER of the classical literatures today must accept a challenge that Robert Frost, no mean Latinist, articulated. How is it possible, he asks in one of his letters, to perceive and recreate the beauty and power of languages which are no longer heard?[1] Yet on another occasion he answers his own question with a paradox, acknowledging that he first heard the word speak from the printed page while reading Virgil's *Eclogues*.[2] To implement such a statement—to foster and validate his own heritage as educator in modern terms—is a measure of the classical scholar's heightened responsibilities to his discipline. Classicists are limited to reading their authors, and only by teaching ancient texts as historians of ideas and critics of generous scope can they now fulfill their duty to their field and their students. They can and must prove that ancient texts, far from being well-turned-out period pieces to preface a sourcebook on Western civilization, have constant living value for today's world.

The difficulties facing both student and teacher are many. The student must learn two abstruse languages for which native speakers no longer exist. Yet he must read enough in depth, on the undergraduate level, for his authors (and hence his field of endeavor) to be meaningful. This assignment is especially rigorous for the growing numbers who come to the ancient languages during their college careers.

The teacher who doubles as literary critic must first come to grips with words. The instruments are readier to hand than before. Computers make *indices verborum* with relative ease. The *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* is complete and virtually half in print. To survey the uses of any given word in the latter *corpus* is to observe not a static language, but one potentially alive, one whose

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words had as many variations and shades of meaning as any tongue still spoken.

One implication of this new availability of research material needs special stress, if only because the classicist has come of age critically with such suddenness. The classical scholar can only be a critic by being a philologian as well. He must not only be a metrist and a literary historian, like his colleagues in English literature; he must be a linguist, palaeographer, and textual critic as well. Not that such knowledge is undesirable in the study of English literature: One of the most famous cruxes in Shakespearean criticism occurs in *Henry V* during the description of Falstaff's death scene. The Folio of 1623 has him talk of "a table of green fields." That Shakespeare wrote "'a babbled of green fields" was not clarified until well into the eighteenth century.

The philologian is a lover of words, and no literary critic can be otherwise. Like the creative artist, he has a duty to be as aware as possible of both the formal and the emotional content of the words he analyzes. I am not referring only to a knowledge of which words are unpoetic, antiquated, or unusual enough to become the special prey of grammarians, though this obviously must figure prominently in the research of those devoted to languages no longer "living." Literary English must itself grow obsolete. When Juliet describes Romeo as a "tassel gentle," we must now examine both words to elucidate Shakespeare's intention, even though each appears in current English. Since we cannot literally hear and speak the languages of Sophocles and Horace, the viewer of ancient literature must sense as best he can how each author's language was alive to him—a task requiring both tact and judgment. Only then can we attempt to see poetry in such a way that, as Eliot suggests:

> every word is at home,
> Taking its place to suggest the others,
> The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
> An easy commerce of the old and the new,
> The common word exact without vulgarity,
> The formal word precise but not pedantic,
> The complete consort dancing together.

The critic's options are richly varied. He may follow Johnson, Coleridge, or Bradley, as well as Jung or Freud, for the past will always have much to teach us. Ultimately, however, only the special finesse of the critic himself will lead him instinctively toward the

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most suitable means of evoking a viable and vital elucidation of a text. It is well to recall Cassirer's words at this point: "The true poem is not the work of the individual artist; it is the universe itself, the one work of art which is forever perfecting itself."[3]

The vitality of language reflects the vitality of the ideas it expresses. Translation—however refined it grows as an art, however contemporary it appears to make the most outworn texts—is only half the battle. An heroic, but impossible effort toward recreation, it sends out a siren call to which every generation must give ear. Here, too, the role of the critic as teacher is crucial.

One danger still besets the critic, whatever his particular interests. Fascinated though he remains with language *per se*, he must not allow himself to fall into the heresy of the so-called "new" (and now aging) criticism. Careful observation of words need not degenerate into mere counting of images or watching parts instead of unities. It cannot exclude full concentration upon a work's historical background and intellectual heritage.

The definition of literature as an "event" is fully applicable to the Classics. Any masterpiece is an artwork, structured of rhythm and sound, an imaginative document to be read dramatically in itself, whether poetry or prose. It is also framed and exposed under certain cultural conditions, by an author as a man of his times, using a pattern of speech that is a changing thing, yet fixed momentarily in a special presentation.

The literary critic's appeal to unity as a governing principle finds a parallel in the classical linguist's growing emphasis on structure. Until this century, grammarians tended to rely on piecemeal analysis. Now they stress more and more treating each language—theoretically, at least—as it was once spoken, as a whole.

Close reading need not obscure one of the critic's primary responsibilities—to inculcate a sense of the values a work possesses. He must, above all, define the issues a work raises in a manner that conveys both its moral earnestness and its applicability to modern society and the modern reader. If a work does not have this quality, it is of little consequence for the historian of ideas and his audience.

The classicist must ever question, with careful scrutiny, the relevance of the texts he expounds. He has not always done so. During this century, there have been relatively few curriculum changes of any importance, especially for the early stages of training. The novice Latin student still bravely campaigns with Caesar through Gaul, whereas the great dictator's actions during

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the subsequent civil war, which he describes with similar apparent simplicity and detachment, have equal, perhaps greater, bearing on what a young person sees in his own society. Cicero's unwilling heroism, as blind idealism confronts realistic despair, is better conveyed in his speeches against Antony and on the final road from Rome than in his fluent exposures of Catiline and Verres.

What work is read is not so important as how it is read. Tastes change; perspectives of criticism alter. In any body of literature, the fortunes of some authors rise while those of others fall. As with any group of masterpieces, some aspects of classical literature will appeal now, some at another time. It is relevance that matters most. The classicist who is aware of new trends outside his own specialty (in philosophy or linguistics, say, as well as in literary criticism) and willing to examine his chosen discipline in their terms will most readily put the proper questions to a text to elicit this relevance with clarity and enthusiasm. To a field like Classics, with its limitations of language and time, this is especially important.

Most ancient literature, especially poetry, whose greatness has ever been acknowledged, is classic because it can attract the literate of each generation through its combination of wit and emotion, irony, warmth, and urbanity. All poetry of genius keeps spiritual intensity under the control of technique. The poet himself serves, wittingly or not, as refiner of the past and prophet of the future. As the constant process of re-evaluation goes on, each generation will see its own likeness in the standard authors. As we change, the demands we make on literature change too. I do not think, though I may well be mistaken, that we are in any way more dedicated or serious now about literature than were our forebears; nor do I believe that any newfound seriousness tightens our powers of critical estimation. We see only certain aspects of literature with a clearer eye than before. If the criteria we apply to contemporary literature help in understanding the ancients, so much the better for easing our progress. The scholar of classical antiquity should not pose as a dealer in sacred idols, sequestered save for the initiate.

At the moment, we are going through a period where the immediacy and intensity of a poem's emotional impetus are of prime importance. In our search for the complex, even if it be the sophistication of an elegantly turned phrase, our interest centers on the collision of ideas and not necessarily on their resolution, on

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the process of a poem rather than its conclusion. This focus explains in part the enormous appeal that the Roman elegists, especially Propertius, have for us. The strength of Propertius' feelings makes its presence felt in verse that cannot always be analyzed for reasoned continuity of tone or mood or sometimes even meaning.

Other necessary and valuable reinterpretations are in progress. The notion that didactic poetry is merely the versification of programmed statement makes such verse unpopular in certain circles nowadays, but it may prove to be a mistaken one. According to Robert Graves: "In didactic verse, where a sudden doubt arises and the teacher admits himself a blind groper after truth (so Lucretius time and time again) and breaks his main argument in digressions after loveliness and terror, only then does Poetry appear."[4] One might include Lucretius' "main argument" as well. To some it seems a reasoned investigation. To others there lurks, scarcely hidden, a multitude of tensions between philosophical aloofness and involvement in human existence, between the creative, structuring processes in nature (and in the ordered work of the poet-thinker) and the irrational chaos native to each endeavor.

Perhaps we seize upon order, pattern, and the like now because of our new insights into and obvious sympathy with the irrational, darker, more upsetting aspects of ancient literature. We yearn for pattern and balance as counterpoise to our own deepening despair. To deny poetry its formality is to be blind to one of its prime requisites. But the critic, composed of an imaginative bundle of prejudices, must find himself and his own responses in each work he analyzes. We sense an ebb and flow between optimism and gloom in *De rerum natura* and Virgil's *Georgics* as emotions fight for primacy.

Here labels can occasionally mislead and impose rigid formulae to which great works of art rarely succumb. One asks with what ears Robert Schumann heard Beethoven's Fourth Symphony to call it a Grecian maiden between two Norse giants. Have those who call the third book of the *Aeneid* a calm surrounded by storms fallen under the spell of its life-in-death nightmarish quality, as searching, changing humanity struggles for survival amid the menace of animate and inanimate, human, monstrous, and divine?

Mr. Graves himself has recently offered an example of how the misguided application of an outmoded approach to the Classics can do harm. During his tenure as Professor of Poetry at Oxford, he chose to attack Virgil as the anti-poet *par excellence,* "who

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has for two thousand years exercised an influence over Western culture out of all proportion to his merits either as human being or as poet."[5] Graves' portrait combines vilification of personality with a variation of the all-too-familiar Victorian outlines of the toadying poet laureate to Augustus, glorifying empire (and writing verse) more out of compulsion than inspiration. But is it toadying to have our supposedly allegorical un-hero, at the most critical moment in the *Aeneid*, kill a now defenseless, suppliant antagonist in cold blood? This is the same hero who, not long before, had been ordered by his dead father to impose the usage of peace by sparing the humbled even while leveling opposition. Can a certain disgust of empire not be observed in this act? To be more general, can we not be allowed to see in the crisis of revolutionary Rome, changing from Republic to Empire, a parallel to our own increasingly urbanized, bureaucratized society, where definitions of freedom and liberty are constantly altering, where slogans mean little in the face of continuing depersonalization and alienation?

The study of antiquity was for so long thought to provide a "model" for life in all its facets that it is not easy to frighten off such a specter. It still haunts classical studies in the form, say, of those who teach language as rhetoric or as a disciplinary *telos* by itself, rather than as a means to articulate ideas. For the classicist, who works only with received texts, language and literature are inseparable. There are still some who treat classical poetry according to a romantic notion of the beautiful, but such one-sided ease often misreads tone and dismisses craft. (Wallace Stevens defined poetry as "the scholar's art.")

We cannot now impose any high-minded notion of patterning ourselves after some half-divine, exotic world. New research on such diverse topics as the origins of the Greek world, slavery and freedom in antiquity, the conflict between paganism and Christianity in the fourth century, should clear any remaining dazzled eyes and point not to a system or systems of such eminence as to deserve unquestioned emulation, but to a community of problems over which minds of distinction labored, then as now.

As literary criticism of the Classics modernizes itself, the study of ancient history becomes narrower. The reason is clear and understandable. In the last hundred years knowledge in disciplines such as papyrology, epigraphy, numismatics, or palaeography has expanded extensively. As a result, more specialized and complex

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aspects of historical analysis have developed (prosopography, for instance), which have on occasion affected literary studies profoundly, as any Homerist will attest. But there has been a more far-reaching result: the increasing need for the historian to master many disciplines and assimilate large amounts of material before being able to present a comprehensive view of antiquity. General histories of Greece and Rome will appear less frequently than in the past. But the new professionalism and developments in methodology that account for this phenomenon are all to the good.

Just as the increased accuracy and acumen of textual criticism have been beneficial for the literary critic, so technical proficiency need scarcely exclude broader results for the historian. The study of inscriptions, for instance, has widened our understanding of ancient social and economic conditions. The rapport between historians and their literary colleagues seems to be closer than it was in the past. The historian, noting the occurrences which mirror the real status of culture, acknowledges that society is in many respects best observed through its writings. The critic must argue that literature, as the imaginative expression of this society, cannot be treated *in vacuo* without losing a large measure of its richness and pertinence. Both will be more and more indispensable to each other as time goes on.

Because of the paucity of material from which to draw statistics, it is very unlikely that a sociological approach to ancient history can have special bearing for some time to come. Even then most ancient historians, I venture, would be unwilling to subscribe to a definition of history that placed it outside the sphere of humanities.

What is alien to us in ancient society will interest a more and more restricted group of scholars, while what we hold in common with antiquity will often best be clarified by the comparative method of investigation. On the university level, interdepartmental courses which probe the continuity of a pattern of behavior or literary theory, of political issues or philosophical ideas, should be of growing, perhaps crucial importance. The ordinary scholar's area of competence in depth must of necessity be limited. But as the rigidities of present curricular arrangements are modified, the classicist can and should play an important role in broader patterns of education through which the term "humanities" itself may even become obsolete.

The most hopeful sign for the future of Classics at the college level, at least in the United States, is the increasing urgency with

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which such matters are debated. It is no longer heretical, though it remains unorthodox in some quarters, to claim that the elimination of Latin requirements over the last decades has had a distinctly positive effect on the field. Deprived of the dubious prize of a captive audience (and a lopsided enrollment), departments have been forced to reinterpret their role so as to become one crucial area of study among many; they must either revise their course offerings or lose their administrative backing and their student following. It is a rare department of Classics nowadays that maintains a prestigious position within a university community without loyal undergraduate support, which demands close confrontation with texts pertinent to its concerns.

Curricular reform continues to be more and more imperative. It involves closer collaboration and cooperation between university and secondary school teachers, to their mutual benefit. In all save the rarest undergraduate departments, it involves teaching the literatures in translation, through surveys of ancient civilization or in courses of limited scope. It involves not only accepting, but profiting from the role of "service" department, especially when this means a closer association with other fields, such as English, philosophy, fine arts, history, or linguistics. The interaction is important and stimulating. It involves streamlining graduate training, perhaps along the lines proposed briefly above for undergraduate curricula, but on a far more scholarly level. Graduate training should be centered on authors, marshaling all philological aids to their interpretation. It will depend, at all stages, on the updating of commentaries, reorienting them away from undue stress upon grammar toward more telling emphases on interpretative matters.

Since modern ways of thinking must enliven as well as be enlivened by the Classics, the demands on the classicist are heavier now than ever before. As scholar he must maintain a stringent exactitude in his appetite for truth. As teacher he must explore new ways of combining the careful study of language with literary and historical criticism. He must see his field—and not only idealistically—as part of the far wider prospect of humane studies. Discipline must foster, not impede, intellectual scope. For the teacher who is not a creator, to work out in practice the implication of Frost's paradox is a formidable undertaking. It must be done. Only then, in the search to formulate and express (in Whitehead's words) "that ultimate good sense which we term civilization,"[6] can the Classics play a vital role.

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1. Frost writes to Sidney Cox, January 19, 1914: "The living past of a poem is the intonation entangled somehow in the syntax idiom and meaning of a sentence. It is only there for those who have heard it previously in conversation. It is not for us in any Greek or Latin poem because our ears have not been filled with the tones of Greek and Roman talk. It is the most volatile and at the same time important part of poetry. It goes and the language becomes a dead language, the poetry dead poetry." See *Selected Letters of Robert Frost*, ed. Lawrance Thompson (New York, 1964), p. 107.

2. "Perhaps the best proof of how much the Virgilian image meant to Frost is his remark that he 'first heard the speaking voice in poetry in Virgil's *Eclogues*.'" R. A. Brower, *The Poetry of Robert Frost* (New York, 1963), pp. 156-57.

3. Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, p. 156.

4. Robert Graves, *On English Poetry*, p. 99.

5. Robert Graves, *Oxford Addresses on Poetry* (London, 1962), p. 29. See also "The Virgil Cult," *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, Vol. 38 (1962), pp. 12-35.

6. A. N. Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, p. 238.

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LEO STEINBERG

Objectivity and the Shrinking Self

The memo I sent to James Ackerman in the fall of 1967 for the December meeting of the humanities conference concerned only the art historical scene. It pleaded for tolerance: for a readier acceptance of subjectivity, for greater freedom in projecting hypotheses, for the extension of art historical thought into off-limits areas, such as sex, and for minds more receptive to the ambiguities of artistic creations. All of which seemed bold enough at the time. But as our conference got under way, it became clear that none of my points needed making; or that, as Herbert Weisinger put it, "the wrong people had been invited." Though they were quickly charged with being a group of stereotyped academics that included no Marxists, no women, and almost no beards, the majority of the conferees were well ahead of me in the repudiation of humanist academicism. If I now resubmit the original memo with a few afterthoughts interspersed, it is as a relatively minimal statement.

Dear James Ackerman,

I am putting down some of the thoughts that occur to me as I ponder your proposed topic, "The Condition of the Humanities." The word "condition" is not mine; in fact, it embarrasses me. Not only does it suggest a pathological state, but it implies that the speaker comes armed with diagnosis and cure; and I want to make no such claims. I will even confess that my field (the study of Renaissance and Baroque art) appears to me sometimes to be in a fairly interesting condition. There is far more good work coming out than I get to read. On the other hand, the bulk of what is now being published, especially by young scholars, seems tedious beyond endurance without being exactly bad; it is all based on A-papers—the sound, unimpeachable output of academic art history. And if this output leaves some of us disappointed, the fault probably lies in our

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own obsolete expectations. It is *retardataire* to demand traditional humanistic rewards from art historical studies whose concern is the kind of data that should only be scanned, processed, and indexed for convenient retrieval.

Two questions suggest themselves: first, whether this new professionalism should usurp the whole field; and, second, why it should be the work of young scholars and recent graduates that turns out to be especially tame and conventional. Presumably, our discipline is not now attracting, or holding on to, those younger people who might approach problems with imagination and courage. We prefer on the whole to nurture the other kind. We introduce them to the technology of research and teach them the proper set of questions to ask with respect to art.

A few years ago the new Graduate Center of the City University of New York undertook to redesign some of the university's undergraduate freshman courses. Those of us who were charged with the art historical end of the project began by asking what one should show and tell to a group of incoming college freshmen, most of whom might never again be exposed to a formal presentation of art. Our answer in part called for breaking up the regular lecture sequence with talks by young scholars. But we would invite only those who had once asked a new question, evolved a way of pursuing it, and come up with a novel insight. It was part of the plan that this new insight contrast with the traditional interpretation which the student would have found in his book. We wanted the irony; the textbook itself was to be put in a new, somewhat dimmer light. What we were hoping to celebrate was a marriage of art scholarship and adventure.

We got off to a splendid start. Our first guest speaker unfolded a revolutionary interpretation of one of the key monuments of Western art, and the students could be seen holding their breaths in the excitement of seeing it done. The speaker indeed had met all but one of our requirements—that of youth. Her opening remark explained that the first fertile question that had started her on the track of discovery occurred to her during a seminar she took in Hamburg in 1928. Two more guest speakers followed, both passing forty, and then that part of the project collapsed. During scores of professional talks delivered at the annual national conferences of art historians, we listened for new questions asked by young scholars—and gave up at last. It seems that we were trying to sell art history to our freshmen for its pioneer spirit; whereas a pioneer spirit char-

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acterizes neither the condition nor even the aspiration of institutionalized art history at this moment.

Institutions cannot, of course, teach people to ask new questions or make them imaginative beyond their gifts. But they can cheer and check. They create a climate of encouragement or disapproval for one set of qualities or another. And to a large extent they predetermine who shall survive the rigors of the environment they create. The value structure of our great graduate schools is familiar. They may still reserve first place for the genius, but lacking genius, they promote the methodical archivist, while the leaper with the unproved hypothesis goes to the back of the class.

The great immigrant European scholars who taught most of us what to teach could afford to lay every stress on objective historical discipline because their humanism was bred in the bone. What the field needed when they were entering it was the corrective of a more rigorous scientism than had ever before been applied to art. And it is because they succeeded that the correctives we need are no longer the same.

Can objectivity be made too much of? When I was a student, a great art historian advised me never to tell my readers or listeners how I came to a problem, or by what steps I proceeded, but to come clean with my findings. His advice has remained so much alive with me that it has urged me ever since to pursue the opposite course. I admire the art historian who lets the ground of his private involvement show. Though we all hope to reach objectively valid conclusions, this purpose is not served by disguising the subjectivity of interest, method, and personal history that in fact conditions our work.

Recently, in a public talk, I heard a senior scholar demonstrate that an important sixteenth-century fresco gained new dimensions of meaning by being referred to an actual site in Rome. Later, in private, he described the circumstances of the first observation that eventually led to his findings. He had climbed a steep Roman hill, had stopped to recover his breath, and turned around with his eyes open. But the ensuing epiphany was censored out of his formal talk, leaving the objective evidence to stand alone. And yet, in this case, the subjective experience pointed to an overwhelmingly important objective fact—namely, that the meaning newly found in the picture had been always accessible, and not only to research scholars, but to every footloose pilgrim in Rome. I suspect that if this excellent scholar had found his own experience of hill-climbing

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and revelation anticipated in some old traveler's diary, he would have cited it as objective evidence.

The finest among modern art historians seem at times somewhat confused in assessing the historical significance of subjectivity in our field. Let me cite another example taken, as all my examples are, from work that is truly exemplary: John Shearman's *Mannerism*.[1] Its second paragraph introduces the author's methodological credo as follows:

> The contradictions in contemporary meanings for the word "Mannerism" are to a great extent due to the fact that most of them are too contemporary and not sufficiently historical. In the attempt to rescue sixteenth-century art from the ill repute that much of it enjoyed in the nineteenth century, it has been endowed with virtues peculiar to our time—especially the virtues of aggression, anxiety and instability. They are so inappropriate to the works in question that some pretty odd results are bound to follow. . . . My conviction is that Mannerist art is capable of standing on its own feet. It can and ought to be appreciated or rejected on its *own* terms, and according to its *own* virtues, not ours.

Can one quarrel with such a program? Yes, on one point; because Shearman's historical sense fails to apply itself to his immediate parent generation. His "conviction that Mannerist art is capable of standing on its own feet" is itself unhistorical, unrelated to Mannerism's known afterlife, during which it suffered ridicule and eclipse. Whatever feet of its own it may have had, Mannerism proved incapable of standing on them. A handful of early twentieth-century scholars at last restored it to consideration and admiration, apparently by endowing it with a wrong set of virtues. Mannerism was rehabilitated in a passionate recognition of kinship by men who were experiencing modern European Expressionism. The inappropriateness of the virtues they projected upon this sixteenth-century art sprang from their felt affinity with another age of anxiety. And it was this subjective intuition of kinship that lent motive, energy, and excitement to their explorations. In the end, their subjectivity constitutes nothing less than the historical precondition for the rediscovery of the subject. Therefore it seems both ungenerous and unhistorical to dismiss as mere error and hindrance the subjective projections of these earlier discoverers. An error which discovers a continent is ultimately as valuable as any later correction.

With the disdain of subjectivity goes the demand that value judgments be eliminated from serious investigations of art since they cannot be objectified. Needless to say, much of the work art

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historians do is well done only in the objective mood, as in the physical examination of monuments, the searching of archives and texts, or tracing the provenance of an altarpiece by identifying its local saints. No one doubts that value judgments would be a frivolous interference in this sort of work. The point about the general disdain of such judgments is that it tends to bar or belittle any work that is not of this sort. It is not that objectivity is ever misplaced; but that the restriction to objective criteria simply rules out certain interests. Since objective criteria are the given criteria, we are faced with a bid to confine research to the filling out of preformed questionnaires. In protecting art history from subjective judgments, we proscribe the unpredictable question into which value and personality may surely enter, but which pertains to art because of art's protean nature. Our probity in always excluding the speaker resembles, as it reverses, the piety which in the Middle Ages always included God—as in the equation 2 + 2 (God willing) = 4.

The artistic universe is so thoroughly value-structured that the objectivity claims, were they to be taken seriously, would amount to mere cant. We still operate with the primitive categories "good," "mediocre," and "best." And we constantly make "objective" conclusions flow from the application of these categories, as when we decide that a certain medieval manuscript is of sufficiently superlative quality to be localized in an imperial scriptorium.

A refusal to suspend value judgments may be realistic in its own way. It reminds one that the world of art works is not self-existent, like the animal kingdom, but that the objects of our enquiry depend for their sheer existence on admiration. Art is cherished, or it does not survive. A succession of value judgments, expressed in neglect or preservation, largely determines what we receive from the past. And it is aesthetic judgment that largely structures the world of artistic forms at their inception: It was the *best* artists who got the big royal commissions; the *best* architects who came to St. Peter's. Whenever this sureness of valuation breaks down, as in the nineteenth century—when the knighthood bypasses Turner to settle on Sir Edwin Landseer—then the failure to choose what we now regard as the greater value becomes itself the material of history.

To say it in other words, the record of past valuations is integrally part of art history, and that record is meaningless without present revaluation. We know it as an "objective fact" that in the Rome of 1510 the *best* artists enjoyed the greatest acclaim; that in the Paris of 1870 the *best* were passed up; that at the time only the

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best critics knew it; and that the artistic consciousness of our own century rests largely on the universal acknowledgment of those former *misjudgments*. We review and judge all past opinions with more of our own, the process being simply the life and afterlife of all art. If Manet did not seem greater to us than Leon Gérôme, then a history of nineteenth-century painting in France would not even be possible; only an incomplete index of paintings produced.

The professional plea to suspend value judgments is neither wholly honest nor practical, and the pretense that this has ever been done is not realistic. This is self-evident if one considers recent phases of art that have yet to become history, or better still if one thinks of the whole phenomenon of film, in which, at this moment, an entire history of art can be seen foreshortened. The process of structuring the field by constant evaluation has of course been going on steadily, while the historian had his back turned. When he finally turns to confront it, the material he receives will have been qualitatively structured already. He will modify that structure over and over, but he will never unstructure it.

Similarly, in the study of older art forms, we can insulate our discipline against subjective judgments only because we safely enjoy a rich and unrepudiated inheritance of such judgments. "Objectivity" leaves it to others to say why the matter in hand is being studied at all. But who are these others? This is precisely the present challenge to every humanistic curriculum.

An eminent scholar teaching in one of the great universities of Western Europe describes a new low of irreverence attained by his students. "Raphael stinks," they declare. Here then is an occasion to reconsider why Raphael should be in! But how? To what objective data do you appeal? Can his inclusion in the curriculum be justified without admiration, on objective grounds alone, by expounding the power and wealth of his patrons, his fame, his innovations and influence—that is to say, without again choosing him, without passionate reaffirmation of his genius today?

In the light of these considerations, the one-sided professional caution against value judgments and subjectivity in scholarship seems like a strangely perverse assimilation of a humanistic field to alien standards.

I remember a conversation I had with Mr. Philip Pouncey some years ago in the Print Room of the British Museum. Mr. Pouncey is universally recognized as the surest eye in the field of Italian drawings. He was criticizing the normal process of art history educa-

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tion which, he thought, put cart and horse in wrong order. Students were taught Raphael before they had learned to tell in a given drawing what made it a Raphael rather than a work of Perino or Giulio. Would it not be wiser, he asked, to start students off with the simple elements of connoisseurship? Should not this be the foundation of all other studies, since it can hardly make sense to study an artist's style, development, or iconography before you have learned how to distinguish the object of your studies? Mr. Pouncey was of course recommending his own kind of connoisseurship as preparation for all other studies in the field. He was doing it with that offhand air that well-bred Englishmen use to deprecate their own skills. It was the merest ABC he was talking about, the trivial but necessary exordium to more ambitious and sophisticated pursuits. Obviously, Mr. Pouncey deserved better than to have me agree. I therefore suggested that one introductory course in connoisseurship would not produce connoisseurship enough. The sort of perceptiveness in attribution which he had in mind was—as he knew perfectly well—not an elementary attainment, like that of an army recruit who has a course in aircraft recognition behind him. It was rather an ultimate virtuosity, compounded of many gifts and long practice. At this point, the great attributionist, warming to the subject but hushing his voice, confessed that this must indeed be the case, for he had felt again and again how his own sensitivity to distinct drawing styles could be blunted by an absence of even one or two weeks during vacations; how any interruption of his continuous exposure to Italian Renaissance drawings would make him feel "as if some vital power had departed from me."

Is it conceivable that a Linnaeus, or any scientific taxonomist, would describe his ability to differentiate within his field in the language of magic?

Of the late Richard Offner it was said (by Panofsky, summarizing the achievements of "Three Decades of Art History in the United States") that he "developed connoisseurship in the field of the Italian Primitives into the closest possible approximation to an exact science." How close is that? Offner had summoned all his resources to distinguish between non-Giotto and Giotto. Inconclusively: for in the end, it is not scientific exactitude which determines the issue, but an idea about human freedom. The question is how far Giotto, or any trecento artist, or any artist at all, can move willfully from one style to another. No criteria that science lends answer that sort of question.

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The objects of our attention differ from the concerns of physical science in being existential human creations; and they differ from the concerns of social science because (in the cases that interest us the most) they are remarkable feats, never repeated. We do not expect them to demonstrate regularities; to the extent that works of art are subjectively structured by personalities formed in the total experience of both art and life, no one orthodox method at any one time can comprehend them. And any exclusive scientism in our discipline has the negative side effect of screening out certain energies of unpredictable relevance that continually feed into the art of the past as well as the present. The attempts to cope with more private or more freely metaphorical and evasive aspects of art become professionally suspect. They tend to be left to art writers, popularizers, critics, psychologists—that is, to men who have neither the habits nor the responsibilities of the historian's hard-won methodology, so that their contributions to the literature of art serve to confirm the discredit of the whole enterprise.

Sexuality is a case in point. A few exceptions apart, the disciplined history of art remains to this day coy and chaste. We still breathe the moral climate of the nineteenth-century aesthetes who staked out our field, and the head of a major American art history department claims to plead "in the interest of privacy and human dignity" when he writes: "Michelangelo's sex life is, quite frankly, none of our business. We cannot treat him, try him or confess him. His physical pleasures, whatever they may have been, have no importance for his art."

What is astonishing in these forthright words is a modern scholar's assurance that a great artist's sexual life could be so divorced from his personality as to remain irrelevant to his art and therefore to us. This can only mean that whatever attention the matter has received in the past was amateur and misguided, and that academic art history at this moment is not coping with it. Yet a man's sex life—even if mocked in the phrase "physical pleasures" and arranged under the heads of sin, crime, and sickness—is no less formative in his personality than his faith or his Neo-Platonist thought. And in that case, how shall it be put out of bounds before its irrelevance is established by trial?

As for violating a privacy, who can say where an ultimate privacy lurks? Centers of privacy shift, as does the public status of sex. There are moments, individual as well as collective, when the sense of the obscene shifts from food to sex, and from sex to death. (In

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some periods—today, for example—a religious experience is harder to discuss socially than a sexual one, and even a minister finds it easier to preach about birth control than about "dying well.") And suppose that Michelangelo's deepest private anxiety were the fear of entanglement in Lutheran heresy. Would the probing theologian be violating his privacy?

Certain problems inevitably tend to remain outside the scope of our approach—some, like sex, of permanent human relevance, others given immediacy by contemporary developments. Such problems are hard for specialists to lay hold of. It is difficult for the specialist to pose novel questions, to expand the criteria of interpretation. Lifting a subject to a new plane may require a fulcrum outside. The goal now being set before our students in the great graduate schools is, in the late Walter Friedlander's phrase, the "conquest of a province." This ideal of mastery in a circumscribed field is only partly positive, for it draws much of its strength from the rejection of dilettantism. But in the present phase of American graduate education the developing threat resides less in dilettantism than in the constriction of viewpoint that comes with consistently specialized studies. And the ideal of the specialist may already be losing appeal, becoming less heroic than the phrase "conqueror of a province" suggests. "The specialist is by definition the Dependent Man," I read in a remarkable article by David Lyle.[2] "He cannot provide the essentials of life for himself. He is dependent upon others to provide, to create opinion, to know what must be done. Dependent Man, properly fed and educated, is Acquiescent Man . . . programmed for Conformity."

Some years ago an interesting difference developed in the pages of the *Art Bulletin* between two eminent medievalists. It concerned the interpretation of the figure of an archer on an eighth-century monument known as the Ruthwell Cross. In 1944 Meyer Schapiro had called it "one of the oldest medieval examples of secular imagery at a terminal point of a religious monument." Sixteen years later the late Ernst H. Kantorowicz adduced theological, legendary, and visual material on the subject of Ishmael, showing that it was Ishmael as symbol of asceticism and desert life who appeared in the Ruthwell Cross archer. Schapiro, he believed, had under-interpreted the image since he "seemed to think of a hunting scene of more or less ornamental character . . . a purely decorative configuration, having no religious meaning at all."[3] Three years later, Schapiro returned to the fray, bringing visual evidence of similar medieval

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bowmen in contexts that can in no way be related to Ishmael. He gently parried his colleague's charge that by denying symbolic status to the archer's figure, he had reduced it to ornament. Between the exclusive alternatives of either religious meaning or none, either symbolic content or pure decoration, he inserted a "content of force," motifs "laden with affect . . . like metaphor in poetry . . . a means of dwelling in an enjoyed feeling or desire."[4] Few authorities will be bold enough to arbitrate between these two scholars. But whether or not Schapiro is right, his conception of the medieval motif which is neither explicit symbol nor decoration owes much to his simultaneous awareness of contemporary and medieval art. Purists may even object that Schapiro's near-abstract terms (such as "content of force") are not homegrown medieval, being furnished perhaps by a modern aesthetic experience that here seems acknowledged as a means of potential insight into past art.

The legitimacy of retrojecting from our immediate experience to remote fields of study touches on the issue of relevance. No one imagines that relevance attaches to particular subject matter. Making things relevant is a mode of seeing.

How relevant is the large Geometric Greek vase at the Metropolitan Museum to contemporary American culture? America has been shaken by three political assassinations, and each time we were forced into an awareness of some of our ritual forms. It became suddenly clear that all our rites of mourning—I mean what we actually do during mourning with our bodies—demand either total inertia or a slow funereal gait that is best adapted to the pace of old women. The physical rhythm of mourning constricts and punishes the normal physical energies of young men. Their need to assert feelings in their own physical mode, in exertion and speed, is choked and repressed in all conventional obsequies. Hence—and I mean literally from our position in afflicted America—one looks back in envy and admiration at the geometric kraters erected at their hero tombs by the Athenians of the eighth century—the great vases with the prothesis scene and, in the band below, the chariot race in honor of the dead man. Their rituals of mourning provided the outlet of vigorous contest for the overflowing energies of their youth. I am not recommending physical exercise or athletic contests as a response to political assassination. It is enough to record that the institution of the Greek funeral games now reveals a dimension of humane wisdom which never before struck home with such accusative power.

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Let me attempt two other examples of ancient things rendered relevant through contemporary experience. At Expo '67 in Montreal, where every major pavilion was celebrating the triumph of film, what was most noticeable was that the familiar form of it, projected upon a single inert rectangular screen, no longer satisfied. The old non-participant screen was becoming as obsolete as the passive stage-space of nineteenth-century Salon painting had become under Cubism. In addition to multiple projections on clustered screens, the screens themselves seemed to split and proliferate, and the split screens could move, releasing showers of visual data, discontinuous systems in perpetual fluctuation. For deliberate complexification of the optical field, it seemed that nothing comparable could have appeared before, at least not outside pure decoration, not in the context of a narrative, dramatic, didactic, or representational art. But the next time I have occasion to think about the development of the Italian altarpiece in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, I will look with a new surprise at its curious multiplication of panels, at its iconic saints and scattered anecdotes shown in different systems and on different scales, yet so juxtaposed that no single narrative or symbolic form can be read without interference from adjacent images. I will wonder, perhaps, how it is that an icon designed, one would think, to focus devotion could evolve into so complex an aggregate of non-simultaneous events. The suggested analogy between the movies' split screen and the medieval polyptych may in the end prove gratuitous and superficial. But even then I will have redefined the peculiar aesthetics of the polyptych in an investigation for which the shock of a relevant contemporary experience provided the impulse.

The experience of film might even induce those European students who had declared against Raphael to look again. It is at least thinkable that their tastes were less offended by Raphael's works (which they can hardly have looked at much) than by certain long-enshrined concepts of Raphael held in our culture. Film can make other concepts available, concepts more relevant to twentieth-century thought and not necessarily less relevant to Raphael than were the concepts of Bellori or Wölfflin.

Susan Langer's *Feeling and Form* contains a brief appendix on film from which I quote these conclusions:

> The artistic potentialities [of the film] became evident only when the moving camera was introduced. . . . The straightforward photographing of stage action, formerly viewed as the only artistic possibility of the film,

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henceforth appeared as a special technique. [In the mode of its presentation, cinema] creates a virtual present, an order of direct apparition, [which Langer calls the dream mode]. The most noteworthy characteristic of dream is that the dreamer is always at the center of it. . . . [In film] the camera is in the place of the dreamer. But the camera is not a dreamer. . . . It is the mind's eye and nothing more. . . . The percipient of a moving picture sees with the camera; his standpoint moves with it, his mind is pervasively present.[5]

It is not my concern now to argue the merits of Miss Langer's theory. But I suggest that the terms of her analysis can be directed to one modality of Raphael's art, especially in its final phases. Raphael's conception of narration-in-space (in the designs for the Vatican Logge, for instance) is tantamount to the invention of a new art, comparable to the new art that was born when the camera first put on wheels and began to roll through the space of the aesthetic illusion. In those Raphael compositions, passing from one to another—especially as they were endlessly republished in series of prints—it is immediately evident that the viewer's standpoint moves unhindered to post itself anywhere in the field of action. The innovation is radical. What the artist invents is a mode of presentation of which one feature at least is most accurately described in today's terms.

Finally a few words on the danger of projecting the modern experience of ambiguity upon the art of the past. In a lecture some years ago on Michelangelo's "Holy Family" tondo, I suggested that the picture worked on several levels of meaning and that its father figure especially was conceived as a compound personification. The artist's *concetto,* frequently criticized for its artificial complexity, seemed to support so many possible readings, so much had converged in his final form, that one came away overawed by its simplicity. After the talk, a friendly colleague, who was well disposed toward my attempt, suggested that "of course, when you come to publish this, you will narrow the possibilities down."

What interests me here is the assumption that multiple interpretations for a single image or feature are self-defeating. Two meanings are fairly safe, given the tradition of typological exegesis. But if meanings multiply, even though they should all seem equally plausible and equally compatible with a given appearance, then it is advisable to settle on one alone or on one analogical pair. For three or four meanings cannot be right at the same time, and to be right is after all the objective. This at least is how I understand

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my colleague's advice, since he was not questioning any of the proposed interpretations, but was only disturbed by their number. His model of "rightness" derived from classical mechanics, or logic, from conceptions of truth evolved in times other than our own.

But I am conscious of belonging to a generation brought up on Freud and James Joyce. *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* were the pabulum of my teens, and I am always ready to welcome another artist who conceives his symbolic forms multi-storied. This means that I am perpetually in danger of projecting my contemporary artistic experience upon the past—which every respectable art historian knows to be reprehensible. But there is another way of putting the matter. If there ever were earlier artists who conceived multi-storied symbolic forms, then ours is the generation equipped to detect it, being trained, so to speak, in the reading of Joyce. And then it becomes our duty (and pleasure) to announce, at the risk even of being wrong, what we are the first to see. And furthermore, if Michelangelo's "Holy Family," for example, should indeed be such a multiple symbolic structure, then it is the simplistic reading imposed on it by earlier scholars which will turn out to have been the guilty projection. It is naïve to imagine that you avoid the risk of projection merely by not interpreting. In desisting from interpretation, you do not cease to project. You merely project more unwittingly. There is apparently no escape from oneself and little safety in closing art history off against the contemporary imagination.

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JOHN M. ROSENFIELD

The Arts in the Realm of Values

EDUCATION FAILS in its purpose if it leaves untouched the basic values held by the student. By this I mean his ethical sense, his powers of intellectual analysis, his capacity for emotional reactions, his spiritual life. These lie close to the fundament of his character, and few means of communication reach them so effectively as do the fine arts. When the experience of a work of art takes place at the fullest potential of its power, when it involves the man's rational faculties as well as his intuitive, wordless reactions to the eloquence of form, then his capacities to feel and understand are expanded, he learns to transcend his limited self.

To insist that aesthetic experience is a central issue in any discussion of the humanities may be restating what is obvious to everyone; but I honestly fear that too often what is commonly accepted becomes commonplace and is thus neglected. Moreover, scholars frequently hesitate to discuss matters that seem to verge on the irrational, and we generally recognize that the experience of a work of art is almost totally subjective. The quality of this event, its intensity and duration, are difficult to measure or to compare with analogous moments—the feeling of fulfillment of a chemist as he perfects a complex synthetic compound, the exultation of a victorious athlete, or the mood of a fisherman sitting silently along the banks of a river at dusk.

I am concerned here less with the problems and insights of the creative artist, whether ancient or modern, and more with the reaction of his audience who are far more numerous. The moment when any man among them becomes enthralled with a work of art, the moment of true and private revelation, becomes one of the important events of his biography—the night he attended a performance of Shaw's *Saint Joan* or *The Marriage of Figaro,* the afternoon he walked about the Church of St. Pierre

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at Moissac or the Pantheon in Rome, the day he understood the method by which Cezanne organized a landscape, the day he felt the eggshell thinness of a Sung porcelain bowl, or the day he first read Camus. Naturally his temperament, his background, and his opportunities will determine which art forms he is capable of experiencing; the moments of perception may occur frequently or rarely, be strong or weak; but when they cease to happen, the man in many important ways has ceased to live.

Today in America, a major segment of our people is first brought into serious contact with the arts in college with the faculty serving in the role of mediator, assisting in the transaction. For many of our humanists and men of letters, this is their prime social function, and it seems to me that all who take it up should have at least three things in common. The first is a deep commitment to the expressive, poetic powers of the arts. The second is a commitment to objective data about the arts (the how, when, where, by whom, and why a work was done, and how much of what we see or hear today was the artist's intention). The third, and most difficult of all, is an understanding of values. Some of these values are a part of history, part of the motivation of the artists about whom we speak—their religious goals, social ambitions, their taste in friends and the other arts, their thoughts in the matter of art theory. Without our awareness of these, we will look upon a work of art from an alien culture in much the same way that a Zulu looks at a steam locomotive. He may marvel at its bulk, its pistons, and its whistle; but without an idea of the principles of steam propulsion, he won't understand what makes it run. Our own obligations toward the realm of values extend, however, far beyond those that operated in the past; for unless we understand the values with which we are entangled today, we will once more resemble the Zulu and stare with rapt incomprehension at the whirring machinery of our own cultural order.

This is the point at which the paths of humanists diverge; for, in the permissive, pluralistic atmosphere of the West, there are almost as many schools of criticism and historical interpretation of the arts as there are religious, social, and professional interest groups. In the visual arts, for example, there are schools of criticism that emphasize the social and ethical role of the arts and are strongly influenced by Marxism or by other socio-economic theories. Other scholars practice a simple biographic

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method that stresses the individuality of the artist, the genius by which he transcends the limitations of his time and social environment—a view that fits those of Nietzsche or Herbert Spencer. Other students, followers of men like Freud or Jung or the *Gestalt* school, explore the psychological aspects of artistic symbolism and the creative act. Iconologists focus their attention on the ideological content of symbols and attempt to place works of art into a context of philosophic and literary values.

Opposed to these men, whose interests are largely ideational, are those who concentrate primarily upon formal problems. One major school specializes in tracing the development of a style in art over long periods of time. In doing so, it suggests that the changes which occur are inevitable, growing from a belief in the internal logic of form and a notion of historical determinism which probably stems from Hegel. There are others who prefer to see works of art entirely removed from their historical context and treated as purely formal exercises, exquisite objects, with no symbolic function. Other students specialize in connoisseurship, which in its basic form is knowledge about the authorship and authenticity of works of art and of their relative quality.

There are also essentially popular schools of criticism. One of these, with André Malraux as its current leader, has assumed that the fine arts are the last reservoir of spiritual values in a materialistic world ruled by industry, commerce, and warfare. In a similar spirit, other scholars study the arts of exotic or antique lands as a romantic escape from the intolerable present. Criticizing the modern world for being what it is, they offer no corrective except a kind of sentimental revivalism of the past. This list could be greatly expanded and might include, for example, the Neo-Scholastics who attempt to adapt traditional Catholic attitudes about art to the modern world, the critics who stress regional or nationalistic factors in the arts, the anti-modernists, or the nihilists and anarchists. This list is paralleled, I am sure, by similar groups among literary critics, political historians, or musicologists.

In our country, clearly, there is no agreement upon a single, fundamental value system by which we judge what is good and bad in the arts. Such agreement has rarely existed anywhere apart from totalitarian states, but rarely have we seen such a bewildering variety of viewpoints. This in itself does not diminish the importance of values; it challenges us all the more to strengthen

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our grasp of the problem. In fact, it is impossible to write a single paragraph of a critical or historical nature today without invoking a whole set of ideological issues. I might, for example, choose to analyze several paintings by Nicholas Poussin and relate them to the events of his biography. But I might also have to answer the critic who would ask why I selected Poussin, with his relatively stiff and mathematical formalism, in preference to more expressionist artists, such as El Greco and Rubens. Another critic would ask why I distract myself with the trivial, contingent data of the man's biography when his paintings are what really matter—in their essential, timeless state. I would surely be asked why I concern myself with the events set in the remote past, in an age of Sun Kings and horse carriages and knee breeches, when I live in the age of rockets and a world aflame with racial and economic turmoil. I can haughtily refuse to answer any of these questions and simply continue in my way, but this in itself is a response. I have voted with my feet, as it were.

Options in the realm of values thus confront the humanist at every moment of his career. To study a painter like Poussin demands a different temperament from that appropriate to Rubens or El Greco. The scholar should be well aware of this, for in his absorption in his subject matter, he "comes to be of just such stuff as that on which his mind is set," as the *Upanishads* suggest. As a teacher and writer, he will project the intellectual and aesthetic values implicit in his subject back into our world, reinterpret them, and give them new life with the infusion of his own vitality. In his first attraction to his material, he will be guided by the hidden tropisms of his own character and by the critical climate about him; as he matures and explores first this aspect and then that, his entire self will be molded by the thing he concentrates on hour after hour, day after day. It is essential, thus, that the subject be relevant to his character. If he makes poor choices, he will be ill at ease, ineffective, and thwarted. The problem of the relevance of scholarship begins at this subtle, highly personal level. No aspect of the problem is more basic.

I suggested above that humanists who deal with the arts should possess three distinct skills: aesthetic sensibility, mastery of objective data, and a sound grasp of values. I also feel that these three should be interlocking and coequal. If any is missing or if they fall badly out of balance, the scholar's work becomes distorted. When the first is dominant, there is a danger of ex-

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cessive sentimentality or of the tendency to treat a work of art simply as an exquisite commodity. The second, the realm of objective scholarship, is the avenue of new information which invigorates and expands the body of accepted knowledge. Essential as it is, the ultimate significance of research rests upon its relation to the other two areas. As an independent discipline, it is instantly broken down into narrow specialities, each directed to a tiny audience. As the nearest to "science" of these three skills, it has been subject to inflated emphasis in our learned journals, where discourse in a scientific format is encouraged. As the most mechanical of the three, it attracts large numbers of men who find it difficult to make value judgments. But questions of value themselves become another and equally specialized form of knowledge whenever they are discussed in isolation. They belong to ethics or other branches of philosophy, but their full significance for humanity is grasped only when they are embodied in personal behavior or given tangible expression in drama, literature, paintings, or music.

Humanists of our age work amid the appalling crises in human affairs that settle over the cities of the world—in Detroit, Cairo, Saigon, Budapest, or Peking. A turbulent onrush of cultural change has been released by the collapse of the old order of the nineteenth-century European national states, their standards of beauty, their academies and salons. Tumultuous have been the birth pains of the new civilization not yet a century old, whose outlines we are beginning to perceive, if only dimly. We see the rise of a new technology of unimaginable power, of new forms of artistic expression in the cinema and still photography, the various light media, new metals and plastics. We see the world with new modes of perception—from great heights and speeds, through powerful microscopes, through television cameras shot to the moon. And while we may still walk barefoot on a dusty road as Tom Sawyer did, we can never regain the innocence of the simpler, more limited visions of the pre-industrial world.

Humanists frequently say that their ability to affect the course of worldly events is sadly limited, as they seek to preserve out of the past that which seems worth preserving and to create things for the future. I feel less pessimistic, somehow, for it strikes me that a profound influence on human affairs has been exerted during the past century by those who have expressed or analyzed the condition of man and his view of the world—in the arts and

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letters, mathematics, and some of the psychological and social sciences. Humanists may not have shaken the world so roughly as did Bismarck or Stalin or General LeMay, nor do they achieve results so quickly as the builders of the atomic bomb, but we need only mention the names of Freud or Einstein or Picasso or Joyce or Eliot to drive home the fact that at its most creative level the potential power of the humanist's vision is enormous.

At a less exalted level and in the field with which I am most familiar, the social relevance of the humanities is still strong. In the study of the arts of Buddhist Asia, for example, historical scholarship has created chronicles of culture where none have ever existed or ancient ones were lost. It has injected rational and impartial judgments into local, factional controversies concerning history. It has saved from destruction monuments of great beauty; and through the exercise of critical judgment, it has singled out from an inchoate mass of ancient relics the works of artistic importance and appeal. New historical edifices, images of the past that help form the goals of the future, have been constructed that strongly affect the self-awareness of young Asians. Historians and poet-critics, like Rabindranath Tagore and his circle or Ananda Coomaraswamy in India or Ernest Fenollosa and Okakura Kakuzo in Japan, helped restore those nations' cultural self-confidence in the face of the overwhelming and often demoralizing material power of the West. And, today, Western and Asian scholars are able to work together with a community of interest rooted in values more enduring than the shifting vagaries of international politics.

In the West, art-critical and -historical studies have been equally important and linked to the building of taste and broad cultural values. For example, from the days of Ruskin and William Morris to those of Walter Gropius at the Bauhaus and to the contemporary struggle to master the planning of our cities, men have built an aesthetic rationale for the new, post-Renaissance era. They have hastened the acceptance of industrially produced objects as things of beauty, helped imbue the arts with the insights of a dozen new disciplines from economics and psychology to the chemistry of synthetic materials. What is far less easily measured, of course, is the basic civilizing function of the arts throughout the world, the myriad private moments of fulfillment and insight given to men in the experience of the arts. These instill meaning into the entire costly apparatus of museums and symphony

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orchestras and libraries and drama groups and literary magazines and college courses in the humanities.

As men of letters and the arts, we retain our influence in the world to the degree that we take into account the whole array of forces that affect the spirit of men—economic and political, scientific and technological, psychic and spiritual, as well as aesthetic. When our labors are thus rooted in the realities of our age, when our own resources of mind and feeling are commensurate with those who created the works we deal with, then for ourselves and those we teach the experience of works of art is filled with the deepest resonance. The works may be as exotic as the Chinese ceremonial jade implements of the Han Dynasty, but when our instruments of perception are tuned to the fullest, such geometric purity and subtlety of form, such modes of thinking, can enrich us beyond measure.

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LEO TREITLER

On Responsibility and Relevance in Humanistic Disciplines

THESE ARE the thoughts of a commuter between two worlds that often seem to be fully exclusive of each other. They are the products of an earnest quest for standards that might serve a man in both worlds.

One of my worlds is the university, where daily we learn more about the impossibility of coasting along satisfactorily on habits and expectations formed earlier. In response there is an uncommon effort, uniting all disciplines, to find appropriate roles for the university in contemporary American society; and there is a shared feeling that this effort must become even more intense.

But in my other world—the field of musicology—we are quite satisfied that the premises of our work are as correct now as when they were laid down. The difference has to be attributed to our isolation from things contemporary and to the absence of any habit for understanding even our distant objects in terms of their meanings for any society.

I happen to be engaged in the study of medieval music, and it is from that vulnerable activity that I draw a perverse sense of qualification to discuss the condition of the humanities and the nature of the charges that are now often leveled against humanists. In such areas of historical studies in the arts as mine, the questions we continue to ask and the goals we continue to pursue represent a notion of knowledge, learning, and scholarship that is appropriate to the collector of buttons and matchbooks, the fly fisherman and the baseball fan. It is that kind of expertise, that pursuit of the exotic and rare, that love of detail liberated from any obligation to say what is served by it, and that relaxing isolation from every other concern. There is the same expectation that the products of

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one's activities—the answers—should be exactly specifiable, that once collected they remain fixed, and that the field grows by accumulating its products in this fashion. (These expectations have been transmitted to our students, and I believe that they have a great deal to do with the gross malfunctions in higher education about which there is so much concern. I must return to that later.)

But there is an alternative to this conception: the belief that learning begins with a concern and proceeds according to the needs created by that concern—the idea that, as students or scholars, we learn in the most profound sense only what we *need* to learn.

Our best work as scholars is done when we care about something intensely, even to the point of obsession and paranoia. That sort of deep concern leads us to the things that we shall have to know about. Because such a concern provides us with so clear a feeling for the attributes that a solution to a problem must have, we are able to recognize the solution with certainty when it is presented to us. For scholars it is really very much the way it is for artists when they know what must be accomplished by a particular portion of their work even before it is realized in detail. Solutions are rejected until one is found that is recognized according to the artist's understanding of the need that must be satisfied. In the education of students, the critical things are to find where they can be engaged—to create a self-perpetuating need for learning—and then to provide the freedom and the assistance they require in order to pursue their concerns. (I believe that college curricula can be deduced from this idea.) In learning on every level, then, the generating and unifying principle is not the discipline, but the person.

Now there is no satisfactory way of passing judgment on the value or importance of the initial concern, except by feel. And I have only a faith born of experience that a study which means to do more than reconfirm its initial presuppositions, no matter how narrow initially, must eventually lead to a sharing of major concerns with other studies that began at points quite far away. If this is so, the conclusions of the historian of medieval music will speak not only to other historians of medieval music. I cannot write a pamphlet on "Choosing a Career in Medieval Music." I can only make some suggestions about how the pursuit of such a career might relate to present problems of much broader interest and of great urgency.

In the alternate view, disciplines become areas of common con-

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cerns and common modes of study, marked off for the sake of convenience and intelligibility, but without any expectation that the boundaries should be ultimately right of unchanging. Within disciplines there are hard regions and soft, regions where there is a consensus that matters are secure, and regions that are unexplored or controversial. The soft regions absorb the major activity; they incorporate not only the determination of facts, but also questions of value and method—especially questions about the bearing of value and method on the determination of facts. The distribution of hard and soft regions is never itself hard or fixed. We soften hard areas in that we redetermine facts, we change values, we create new conceptual structures. And the student or scholar may travel over the landscape according to his needs.

I believe that this conception of learning and of "discipline" offers a way of dealing with the challenge that is thrown against contemporary humanistic scholarship. We are reminded by our critics that we once claimed special competence to educate the young about the important and the beautiful—about *value*. But we have gone off the track and disqualified ourselves, it is said; more accurately, we have remained on the same track while history has gone off in another direction. It is feared, on one hand, that we are fiddling while Rome burns; on the other, that we are, in any case, fiddling the wrong tune. Joseph Kerman has observed that the great majority of musicologists are preoccupied with music before Monteverdi, whereas for the young today music that is earlier than Mozart does not sing.[1] But I argue that the substance constitutes no proper ground for rejecting the activity. If the study of medieval music now looks unreal and inhuman, it is not because tastes have changed and the music no longer appeals. It appealed in its own day, but—let us face it—we have had better for a very long time. Nor is it because we cannot learn from it how to cope with social injustice. *That* sort of criterion, as I shall suggest shortly, is taken only by default. No, it is for reasons that would make the study of Folk Rock and Soul Music as deadly as the study of old-time music has been. And if I want to find standards that will serve me in both of my worlds, I must try to learn something of what those reasons are.

One way of looking for the answer is suggested by an insight of Thomas Kuhn: A field's paradigms are normally reflected most fully in its elementary textbooks. They enter the literature of advanced research only when they become controversial. The prin-

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ciple applies as well to those general survey courses so typical of the humanities through which we represent our disciplines, let it be remembered, to beginners. I want to sketch an analysis to suggest that if we are failing to make human contact, the reasons have deeper roots than the administrative articulations of our disciplines or our choice of subject matter. They are rooted in the question of what we teach when we teach any subject or, reflectively, what we consider worth learning about any subject.

The surveys in the arts to which I have reference are designed for "general education," the supposed compromise that emerged from the struggle between the interests vested in the liberal arts and in vocational training. General education is, in fact, not such a compromise; rather than giving a little bit of the former, it merely guards against too much of the latter. What the general education principle has always ignored is that the liberalizing and empowering aims of a liberal education are attainable through the right pursuit of *any* specialized concern. That is central to my argument.

Two axioms have supported the general education principle: that a well-educated man is well rounded—which is to say that he is conversant with the whole range of our fields of knowledge; and that he is the conscious heir of the traditions of Western culture. Both axioms call for the transmission of great wealths of material, and the second calls for a historical orientation. This is why historical surveys have come to be the prevailing mode of general education, so far as the arts are concerned. It is in their ways of apprehending their material, in their version of the historical principle, and in the place they accord to such a principle that our surveys reveal the controlling concepts of the fields they represent. The intention to present a cultural history of Western man does not alone entail a commitment to those concepts. But they have come to dominate nearly all such presentations more or less. That itself is a central fact of our recent history.

It requires only a moment's reflection to recognize that the real subject of historical surveys in the arts is not artworks, but the processes that are thought to produce them and through which they change. The individual artwork is related to the process—to history—much as a single frame is related to a film (ante-*Marienbad*): Its sense depends on its context, on what has preceded it and what follows it. Conversely, if a single frame is cut out of the film, the sense of the whole is disrupted. In music surveys, one does not present Schoenberg without showing his roots in Wagner and his

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consequences in Webern. And one does not ask students to comprehend Wagner and Webern without the mediation of Schoenberg. This much alone shows the underlying commitment to those beliefs about what is necessary in order to understand something, which Karl Popper discussed in *The Poverty of Historicism.* The point is that no other basis for the comparison of artworks has been considered so important as the chronological-genetic one. As a consequence, artworks derive their meanings primarily from their location in a sequence, and many of the primary categories of art criticism are series-bound. (For example, the terms "atonal," "nonrepresentational," "pre-classical," and "mannerism" tell things about artworks that are worth knowing only when they are compared to earlier and later artworks.)

Such critical categories provide a special criterion of artistic significance—the criterion of *historical* significance—which substitutes for standards of artistic value and which, indeed, offers refuge from the challenge to derive meaning in any other sense from individual artworks of the past. I shall shortly suggest why students can perfectly well be expected to find this substitution and evasion unpersuasive, to say the least.

The present obsession of humanistic disciplines with the historical *process* results, on the introductory level, in an undermining of the very purposes of liberal education. This is certainly unintentional, but it is nevertheless easily observable. I should like to illustrate with a passage from a student essay—one written, in fact, by a high-school student. The members of the class were asked to jot down their impressions of an Indian raga as compared to a medieval Latin song, recordings of which were played for them. Here is what one sophomore wrote: "The Latin song was written basically to entertain. To achieve this objective, poetic language and tempo were employed. A new idea had been introduced: melody, and the doors were ready to be opened for harmony. The first step toward the symphony had been taken." The passage is incoherent, and that is important for it shows that whatever story he meant to reproduce, he had not got the details of it quite right. But in connection with that observation it is even more important that, instead of telling simply—as he was asked to do—what chords in him responded to those melodies, he produced, with characteristic baby pomposity, a crude parody of someone else's regimentation of experience.

The lesson is that the most memorable things to the young stu-

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dent are the structural paraphernalia through which we present material; the details are easily forgotten. And the apparatus lies there in his mind, ready to integrate every new experience as a confirmation of something he already knows. Clearly this can produce nothing but rigid and servile minds. The alternative is to open the very apparatus itself to inquiry. This means education not limited to the hard areas of disciplines, but pointedly exploring and creating a tolerance for the soft ones as well, and as early as possible. The student must be led through the grounds of knowledge in order that he not be deluded about the nature of it. He should see knowledge as a human product: made and clung to, not plucked from some garden of eternal verities. Otherwise what is called education is more accurately regarded as indoctrination.

And it surely is indoctrination, for we transmit the fixed and eternal assumptions and goals of our fields without asking whether students can care enough about them to internalize them and make them their own. We do not ask whether they constitute the proper context of need in which students will hungrily acquire the knowledge that we wish them to have.

I believe that there tend to be two prevailing patterns of response to this situation among students. Some, like my young high school student, become obedient and unquestioning, almost zombies. They are passive about learning, and they assume that what they learn is a direct function of what we teach. They expect us to deliver, of course, and their evaluation of their education is made in terms of the quality of the delivery. They become angry—even experience emotional crises—when they are confronted by a teacher who makes confessions about his humanity and the softness of his field. Of course, it is entirely inappropriate that we should expect them to be inventive later on.

Students who are not given to such passivity have tended lately to measure their education against the motivational context that is most prominently available, the socio-political context. They demand "relevance," but their embracing of that criterion is a consequence of our failure to provide any others that can have meaning to them. It is merely a further neglect of our responsibility to become converted to that criterion ourselves. Needless to say, these opposite tendencies are often mixed in the same person.

But if indoctrination is the effect, it is not the initial intent. What occurs at the lowest level merely reflects the conditions at the highest. Our disciplines are conducted with little awareness of

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their theoretical bases. The conventional dogmas through which we organize things—historical development, evolution, *Zeitgeist,* and so forth—either operate below the level of consciousness altogether or are treated as facts once verified and no longer open to question. Only one principle is recognized as a guide to the formation of historical knowledge: objectivity, objective reporting of data, deductive reasoning from the data to conclusions. The scholar as an active knower, feeling, judging, forming commitments, is in the picture only through compromise with objectivity. The indoctrination of the student reflects the self-deception of the scholar.

His mind preoccupied with the *process* of history, the student is likely to wonder what makes it go. In some degree, elementary expositions usually satisfy his curiosity with some hints of an explanation, no more than hints, however. Historians do not usually offer fully developed explanations, as Carl Hempel observed in a famous essay.[2] The most important hint is the insistence upon following chronological order, for that places direct causation at the center of the historical process. And this, in turn, is a clue to the tendency to explain history as a *logical* process, as a series of stages that follow as conclusions follow from premises. There are all sorts of manifestations of that: the "mainstream" attitude that disregards whatever does not obviously follow from or lead to something else; the related appeal to an evolutionary concept that is Lamarckian (orthogenic) rather than Darwinian[3]; the frequent references to what is implied for the future by a given stage and the willingness to take the next step—talk of "anticipation" and even of "what had to be." This last step is important to recognize, for it shows that the construction of history as a logical process leads directly to a notion of historical necessity.

Of course, the stringing together of histories on this principle is itself an exercise in logic. The task to which it addresses itself should really be stated this way: "How can I arrange works and styles along a continuum so that each will appear to follow in a logical way from the preceding?" Now sometimes that exercise is carried out in a most persuasive way. But nearly always there is a point at which an epistemological switch occurs. Whereas in fact the historian has aligned things according to a certain model, he now persuades himself that he has puzzled out what happened and why—perhaps even that he has understood the forces of history. He operates for a time as a human intellect, trying this and that, piecing things together, creating structures; then he denies that he has

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done so, claiming instead to have performed only acts of observation and deduction under the rule of objectivity. What is significant in the light of the model is now believed to be significant in fact. Conversely, what has been left out of the narrative because no place could be found for it in the chain of cause and effect is now unimportant and not worthy of study.

The greatest exclusion of this sort has been Oriental art, of course. It is always an embarrassment because to force Oriental art into such patterns is far more obviously distorting than it is with Western art. The responses have been varieties of provincialism: total exclusion, or inclusion as an early stage that has become frozen. (Lately there has emerged a new accommodating view that Western art is becoming frozen, with all stages simultaneously present, just as in Oriental art.)

When the history of art is explained as a logical process, the historian compliments not only himself for his objectivity, but the artist as well. The artist seizes upon the implications of what his predecessors have done and carries them out. He is often seen, in fact, as working at "the objective tasks of history." Artists are often quite neutral figures in historical narratives, not much more than vessels. Artistic influence is treated in the manner of virus disease. The historian has only to show that the artist was in the right place at the right time in order to conclude that the latter was infected, quite apart from any effort of his own. Like the historian, the artist is relieved of any responsibility for what transpires, as long as he has been objective.

These explicit or implicit beliefs in the logic and necessity of history are everywhere detectable in talk about modern art: in the justification of particular styles or movements as the next logical step, in the testing of works and styles against a celestial calendar in order to determine whether they have arrived on schedule or have missed the boat, in interminable claims and counterclaims about the mainstream and where it is heading, in the description of the history of twentieth-century art in terms of the successive stripping away of the layers of the post-Renaissance tradition.

What is all this but that pernicious old doctrine *Das Aktuelle ist vernünftig*? And why should we expect it to persuade those who believe in neither the necessity nor the reasonableness of things as they are?

Here is a kind of answer to my initial questions: We play a game in a box. We say the box is the whole world, and the object and

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rules of the game are the only ones open to rational men. We teach our young how to enter the box and how to play the game. But when these pretenses lose their persuasiveness (as seems now to be happening), we should respond not just by building new boxes and inventing new rules. We can learn—and teach—how boxes and rules are made and how people use them. Then the humanities would again be the province of human beings, contrary to the puristic hope reflected in the myth of objectivity. And as long as this is even imaginable, there is still reason to think that we do not neglect our larger roles in continuing to follow our callings.

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IV. Conclusion

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JAMES S. ACKERMAN

Two Styles: A Challenge to Higher Education

Objective Analysis vs. Engagement

THE TWO-CULTURE problem that worried us a few years ago seems less serious these days; scientists and humanists are communicating with one another, maybe better than they used to, and surely better than the older members of either "culture" communicate with the younger. The generation gap itself—the characteristic split of the 1960's—is more dramatic and often more violent than its supposed predecessor and cannot be explained or understood simply in terms of the normal pace of cultural change.

The conflict is not so much one of ideologies as of styles. The senior style, Objective Analysis, is the better established; it represents the intellectual achievement and position of the first half of the twentieth century, a period that has been called the Age of Analysis. The upstart is the Engaged Style, the channel through which young people are searching for new sensations and experiences, expressing their mistrust of authority and tradition, and bearing witness to strongly felt convictions. The Engaged Style is more penetrating than the modes of student unrest in earlier times, though it has similar surface characteristics; it is global, and it seems to have powers of survivial that will keep its adherents from joining the Establishment as readily as their fathers did. Its intellectual stimuli are variable and inconsistent—Western romanticism, Oriental mysticism, anarchism—but they have in common that they did not exercise much impact on the American intellectual of middle age who now represents the Establishment.[1]

The style of Objective Analysis assumes that the primary responsibility of the individual scientist, scholar, or artist is to his subject and craft. For the researcher and teacher, this implies that one should attempt to examine one's material as objectively, as imper-

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sonally as possible in order to minimize the danger that one's own point of view might distort the interpretation of the material. To have a point of view at all is considered to be an unscientific position unless it can be demonstrated to be the result rather than the stimulus of investigation. It is labeled "unscientific" because the educational theory of the last generation was haunted by a scientific image—but not one that would flatter a creative scientist, because it regarded science as pre-eminently an enterprise of dissecting, measuring, and testing, a laboratory affair concerned not with the making of principles and theories but only with demonstrating their validity. This style forged tools of great sophistication, from psychoanalysis to atomic fission, from analytic cubism to analytic philosophy, from the New Criticism to the digital computer.

In each discipline, the method of Objective Analysis has required the fragmentation of the object of investigation; philosophers put aside the study of the embracing concepts that had occupied their colleagues in preceding centuries to examine the use and interaction of words; psychologists came to see that the personality is not a unit but a complex of conflicting levels, and devised a therapeutic technique on the principle that the integration of a disturbed personality could be achieved almost entirely by analysis of its components; physicists pursued the investigation of matter into its smallest complexes and eventually discovered and unleashed a terrifying power by breaking down even these into unstable subunits. A similar method came to dominate historical and critical studies as well. But properly pursued, the analytic method is not an end in itself; in each field its purpose has been to facilitate the study of the interaction of the analyzed parts with one another and with the observer and to arrive at definitions generally termed operational.

The power that atomic fission gave to those who discovered how to bring it about and how to control it is symbolic of the over-all effectiveness of Objective Analysis. It has facilitated the transmission of data and technique, promoted an incalculable contribution to the sum of knowledge, and brought about an extraordinary refinement of our critical faculties. In addition to its quantitative achievements, it has proved to be the means by which, in the span of only a half century, the American scholar, scientist, and artist have been able to arrive at a level of sophistication that equals or surpasses that of their European colleagues. Though largely a European creation, it is a style that suits American culture.

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The Engaged Style cannot be defined clearly in these terms because it opposes not only the method of Objective Analysis, but the concept of an articulated method itself. It invites an existential absorption of experience rather than the channeling of investigation toward particular ends, and it resists the effort of analytic teachers to discipline the expression of feeling for the purpose of communication, persuasion, and achievement. It is individualist, vigorous in its opposition to prevailing systems and to the power that Objective Analysis has given to those who practice it. Its strength is a strength of antithesis, calling to attention the values that were considered irrelevant and damaging to the method of the opposition. In the form of student activism, it is beginning to make itself felt as a force in education through criticism of administrative regulations, of the academic authority and standards of faculties, and of curricula and teaching that lack "relevance" to contemporary life and issues. Its intellectual fuel is said to be provided by a variety of writers including Hermann Hesse, Herbert Marcuse, Norman Brown, Marshall McLuhan, Che Guevara, and the spokesmen of the black revolution, but I believe that these writers are more often referred to than read, and that when they are read, it is not for guidance so much as for the buttressing of attitudes already formed.

Criticism from this source now is forcing a reassessment of the methods of Objective Analysis. It is becoming clear that our attempts to approximate objectivity—a condition that psychologists long ago showed to be unattainable—keep us from recognizing and examining the beliefs and principles by which we work, and promote a professional training primarily devoted to method rather than to the study and formulation of principles. While a search for *principles* may help to reveal useful interconnections among different disciplines (as the theory of evolution or the concept of entropy has been used effectively in cultural history), quite different *methods* are required for studying objects in diverse fields,[2] and an increasing emphasis on "methodology"[3] has isolated and narrowed all the disciplines. The danger of overspecialization so often cited in discussions of education is the inevitable product of a system that discourages generalization, for only through generalization can the common ground between different areas become visible.

Furthermore, the scholar and student trained to suppress their convictions and feelings in order to arrive at an objective statement are unable to establish within the system firm grounds for judgments of value. Consequently, scholars are poorly equipped, regardless

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how learned they may be, to make judgments where a consensus has not already been established (as with the masterpieces of the past), and rarely have taken positions on contemporary public, moral, and aesthetic issues. The increased political activity of some academicians in recent years, in part stimulated by the Engaged Style, only emphasizes the point, because it has remained extracurricular, divorced from professional attitudes, and consequently no more effective than the public roles of other concerned citizens. The physicists who collaborated in the making of the atomic bomb, appalled by the human consequences of their brilliant achievement, sought expiation in the political arena rather than in a reassessment of the principles and aims of laboratory research.

One of the strongest supports for scholarly disengagement has been the nineteenth-century delusion—applied particularly to the humanities—that the study of great works makes the student not only more versatile but a finer human being. Values residing in the object were believed to have the power to reform the values brought to it by the subject. The falsity of this claim is apparent; apart from the dubious assumption that values exist independent of a recipient, we can find throughout history men of great knowledge and sensibility who have used their skills to evil as well as to virtuous ends[4]; the only claim we are justified in making for analytic education is that it helps the recipient to be more effective, more independent, and harder to trick. I am not convinced that we can devise any system of education that will make men good as well as efficient; but whatever our aims, they cannot be served by the self-deceiving myth that knowledge is synonymous with virtue.

A final limitation of Objective Analysis is its tendency to direct attention only to the kind of object that yields most readily to its method: to verbal rather than to visual and aural compositions (and to aspects of the visual and aural that can best be verbalized); to the products of "high" culture rather than to popular and material culture; to the classical tradition of Western Europe rather than to the more elusive and, to us, mysterious cultures of Asia and Africa; and to the increasingly minute examination of well-established fields rather than to the exploration of uncharted territory.

When the Engaged Style defines a relevant educational experience in terms of a particular subject matter, it is accepting uncritically one of the principles of the opposition. The educated individual is not identified by what he knows, but by how he thinks and acts. The truly relevant experience is the one that helps us to

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articulate and to communicate our beliefs and to expand the capacities of our imagination and senses; it is a moment in the maturation of human functions, and only incidentally the acquisition of particular data.

The intensely felt convictions of the engaged individual are not gathered from the books and classrooms of analytic professors, but are absorbed, from infancy on, out of the subterranean stream of our democratic and Biblical heritage. An ethic transmitted more by parents—particularly mothers—than by teachers, and concocted of the Constitution, the Ten Commandments, and the Sermon on the Mount continues to hold sufficient emotional power over Americans in the 1960's to provide a passable substitute for religious credos.

The sophisticated generation of objective analysts devised tools to free us from the dark power of such unconsciously acquired beliefs and superstitions, and to subject all simple idealism to scientific scrutiny. But expression and action—if not thought—on the major issues of our time continue to be dominated by underground idealism. Passionate feelings about liberty, equality, freedom, fair play, individuality, and so on affect public affairs more than sober analysis and statistical research. While they hold American society together, they also are the source of intense internal conflict, because they can clash among themselves (for example, loyalty to one's country vs. the Brotherhood of Man; individualism vs. the sharing of benefits).

For all of its influence upon the intellectual timbre of this country, the style of Objective Analysis paradoxically nurtured the forces of the opposition by supporting an educational system that was not rigid and exacting, as might have been expected, but permissive or "progressive," emphasizing individual initiative and "creativity." Before the curricular reforms of the 1950's, Americans were not expected to be really serious about their education until they reached graduate school, at which point the curriculum did abruptly become rigid and exacting. The inconsistency is one result of the absence of any philosophical support for the analytic method; educators were eager to adopt the method, but lacked the conviction to organize the system around it.

That the American manifestations of Engagement only partially explain its genesis is proved by the recent explosion of student activism across the world. Huge numbers of young people have ignored physical safety and the protection of the laws to demon-

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strate in behalf of the oppressed (whether themselves or others) and in opposition to the oppressor. While this may be explained partly as a reaction to the mechanization and depersonalization of modern life, its occurrence in preindustrial societies (for example, India) suggests that the common denominator may rather be awareness of the impermanence of institutions, the threat of overpopulation, and the potential imminence of global annihilation. Facing these terrors, today's students question and resist the traditional fare and style of the humanistic disciplines. Disengaged reexamination of the past offers too little preparation for such a future. For some, drastic action seems to be the only response; a greater number seek the discipline and the content of an education that will prepare them for the special responsibilities that fall to those who have the advantages of advanced learning.

Although it is true that adherents of the Engaged Style constitute a minority, even among university students, the statistic is not relevant; in the competition for dominance in the intellectual spheres, it is the only new force worthy of attention.

The social role of the style of Objective Analysis is to preserve and to refine our processes of thought and action and our institutions; it is a bridge that joins the traditions, the experiences, and the norms of the past to the present. Since it is not itself disposed to normative judgments, it has been able to accommodate innovations that meet its standards of objectivity, but reluctantly: While it is not intentionally conservative, it has great inertia that resists deflections from familiar paths.[5] In some aspects, Objective Analysis could be seen as a communal superego, by contrast to the Engaged Style which, in its explosive drive for expression, would be the societal equivalent of the id. Engaged expression, when it is extreme and violent, is prompted more by feeling than by thought—feeling linked with the basic drives of childhood, which can remain at a child's level of articulation. It has been given little encouragement to more mature development by an analytic mode of education that refuses to confront issues which threaten to become too charged to be resolved by pure scientific method.

If the personality of the educational community is split in this way, it cannot be reintegrated simply by repressing its "id." A more promising therapy would be to encourage the articulation of deeply felt convictions by giving them rational as well as subconscious expression. This responsibility of the teacher and scholar cannot be assumed so long as feelings and values are exiled from the classroom.

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In trying to formulate goals for higher education in the coming years, we must preserve the best in both of the styles and find ways of arbitrating their differences. The Analytic Style gives the individual precision tools with which to manipulate his environment. From it, we should preserve the degree of objectivity and rational method required to support intercourse among individuals with different aims and talents, and we should retain the principle that knowledge of what happened in the past and in cultures different from ours is essential to our survival and must not be lost. The Engaged Style demands effective human contact between the individual and the object of his attention; it has shown us that a legitimate function of higher education can be to help people to formulate and actively observe ethical and aesthetic commitments.

Goals for Higher Education

Since the age of Objective Analysis has defined its functions in terms of techniques rather than of principles, the aim of higher education has been simply to train students to perform effectively. What they should perform and why have not been discussed seriously; each individual is expected to decide this for himself. So the growing adolescent is assigned the most crucial decision of all: to determine the purpose of the whole educational enterprise—and without the encouragement of his teachers. No matter how effectively techniques are taught, they cannot help students to make this decision wisely. Educational leaders describe their goals in vaguely articulated expressions of confidence in the educational efficacy of the values presumably transmitted by contact with the great works and thoughts of the past and with the mature scholars who teach and do research on these works and thoughts.

This vacuum of purpose is the inheritance of an earlier period in which the social function of education was to prepare a small number of the sons (and a few daughters) of an economically privileged and powerful class to assume well-defined responsibilities in the community, primarily through the professions and other roles of leadership. The universities were not expected to define the goals of education; figuratively, they contracted to produce graduates equipped to perform the tasks and to reflect the principles defined by the dominant class. The dependent position of the universities in formulating goals was reflected in the menial position of professors in terms of income and status.

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Today, the social role of higher education is radically altered.[6] With enormously expanded enrollments, and with a significant shift of sponsorship from private to public support (even for private institutions), a democratic education open to all citizens on the basis of merit rather than privilege is nearer to being realized and provides the base on which an educational philosophy may be constructed. The unrest in the new generation of students is due in part to the failure of educators to redefine their goals in terms of this wholly different function. Because today's student is not being prepared to perform predetermined roles, he wants to be trained not only in how to understand and how to perform, but in how to choose what it is he wants to understand and to perform.

These decisions, which are ethical as well as practical, have come increasingly under the control of educators, as other social institutions, particularly the church and the family, are losing contact with, and normative influence over, young people, and as other professional groups such as lawyers and doctors, because of the increasing specialization and democratization of their services, have had to reduce their role as moral preceptors to individuals. The influence of teachers is increased further by the fact that education is virtually the only path to interesting and remunerative careers; young people can ignore the guidance of ministers and parents, but they must satisfy their teachers or relinquish many of the benefits of our society. The era of the self-made man has passed.

In this situation, educators cannot choose whether or not to assume the responsibility of guidance; it has been assigned to them. If a teacher refuses to face the issue of value decisions and preserves his scholarly neutrality, he is then not socially neutral, but indicates unconcern or incompetence to deal with the implications of what he teaches. This itself is a value decision by default.

The need for individuals in all fields prepared and willing to make decisions on ethical grounds increases as more specialized skills are required in our technological, business, and professional enterprises, and as the specialist controls smaller and smaller segments of larger and larger systems. Inevitably, the impact of the division of labor is to reduce the individual responsibility for the larger decisions in our society. In the professions, a crisis is being caused by tensions between the internal inertia of scientific progress and the well-being of the society as a whole. Characteristic examples from the field of medicine[7] have been such issues as: What proportion of limited human and financial resources should

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be allotted to advanced research as opposed to community care, particularly of the indigent? When is a heart donor dead, and who decides? How shall the imminent capability of control over the human mind be itself controlled? These questions cannot be solved with technical expertise; they must be referred to a value system developed outside the sphere of science, and because they are so important, the development of that system must be part of professional or pre-professional training.

Educators in the sciences and technologies already are aware of the shortcomings of overspecialization; the cure most frequently prescribed is a larger dose of humanities courses. But the humanities, themselves driven by internal "scientific" imperatives and guilty no less than the sciences of overspecialization, have not been able to respond effectively. The challenge cannot be met simply by introducing the specialist of the future to the arts, literature, and philosophy; though these fields offer unique potentialities for examining values, the study of them is no more assured of being a humane enterprise than the study of the sciences or social sciences.

It is possible for a teacher to present value issues openly—without imposing his convictions—by aiding his students to examine and to articulate the principles by which they live and to investigate the relationships between those principles and the actual situations of life and of scholarship or research. Yet it is not necessary for him to conceal his own convictions; a teacher can himself be a model of the mature and conscious integration of belief and expression or action, while being prepared to entertain from students and colleagues ideas that differ from his own. Occasionally, the values of student and teacher will conflict without an apparent possibility of resolution, as has happened in destructive confrontations during the last two or three years, particularly over the educational goals of racial minorities. These eruptions may have been inevitable, but they probably were made more violent by having to break through the calm crust of academic neutrality. If the classroom were a place for examining feelings and clarifying convictions, it could accommodate divergences of principle more peaceably.

The area of agreement is larger than that of conflict. Diversified as our country is, the ideals of the Constitution and of the system of laws built upon it are generally shared; we tend to disagree on interpretation rather than on principles. The value system is for this reason social and political in character, and it is natural that we should define the goal of our education in social-political terms.

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The increasing demand in all the functions of modern life for people with refined skills and with the capacity to adjust to rapid change confers special privileges on educated men and women that are accompanied by special responsibilities toward society. It is therefore a legitimate purpose of higher education to prepare students to assume the responsibilities as well as to practice the skills: Generically, they may be defined as *the making and the maintaining of a humane social and physical environment.*

But the forces impelling the university outward toward the community must be restrained by the centripetal forces of a tradition of cloistered learning undisturbed by immediate social priorities, not just because the university must develop the inner resources as well as the public effectiveness of its scholars and students, but because a portion of the social needs of the future will be met by learning and research the utility and value of which cannot be calculated now. If radical efforts to wholly politicize the university were to succeed, they would restrict its universality, increase its materialism, and, in the end, be more destructive to individual and social freedoms than pedantic academism.

For this reason, the proposed goal does not imply an expansion of college programs in the social sciences; it would be an arid future in which a poet, a historian, or a forester were not thought to be so important a contributor to the public welfare as the social worker and economist. We cannot anticipate in what areas and situations future students will find opportunities to make their contribution; the significant change would be the introduction not of new subjects of study, but of approaches to existing subjects that will make it more possible to realize the potentialities of the educational experience.

A program seeking to prepare young people to assume responsible roles in society must admit ethical and aesthetic judgments into scholarship and teaching; it demands a significant change in the orientation of higher education—a return to traditions abandoned only at the start of this century with the rise of Objective Analysis. The education of the privileged class before 1900 was intended to produce good and pious graduates through grounding in a classical curriculum and in religious principles. To attempt to reintroduce ethical issues today may appear to be a dangerous approach to training a large and diversified student population in a society without generally accepted—or acceptable—religious or philosophical principles. But the violent disruptions that are a recurrent feature of

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today's university life suggest that the more dangerous decision would be to perpetuate education that does not recognize even the need for ethical and aesthetic commitments.

My attempt to define educational goals on the vague basis of America's liberal social tradition is simply pragmatic; it lacks philosophical justification. It is a device for persuading a vigorously antiphilosophical and diffusely moralistic society to face the need for formulating principles, for making judgments. We may, paradoxically, arrive at a philosophy of education only by making that achievement one of the goals of education.

Functions of the Humanities

It used to be said of the humanities that they were distinguished from other disciplines in "dealing with values." The statement is meaningless, because it would be impossible to define "values" in a way that would exclude them from the purview of the sciences and social sciences. What does distinguish the humanities is that they are devoted to the study of things that men have made and thought, and on this account they cannot be adequately studied and taught without reference to value systems. The humanities are a constellation of disciplines peculiarly adapted to assist students in the articulation of feelings and beliefs and in the processes of self-realization.

But this distinctiveness has not protected the humanities from the dehumanization of the Objective Analytic method. By subjecting the experience of art, literature, and philosophy to the limitation of a particular alliance of history and criticism, humanistic education has restricted and perverted its potentialities.

The prevailing, historically oriented, methods of criticism promote the suppression of the uniqueness of the individual work or act by a relentless emphasis on the chronological flow of culture, so that the focus of critical attention is on a process rather than on the single object. Virtually all instruction in the arts and literature from secondary through graduate training is offered within the framework of a linear historical sequence; general courses and books "survey a field" from an early date to a recent one; the more advanced follow an identical process within a segment of the chronological span. It is understandable that a society obsessed by process and productivity, one in which individual achievement is progressively demeaned, should sponsor a theory and method of historical

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criticism so well adapted to its dynamic thrust, but humanists cannot be at the same time critical of that society and loyal to the historical attitude that justifies it. The humane alternative is not the rejection of history, as the style of Engagement suggests, but the formulation of a historical and critical method that sets human achievements in relief, within the context of the events and ideas that make them possible.

Our linear-historical method has also confined the concept of our tradition within the narrow frame of the high culture of Western Europe and its roots in Greek and Roman thought and Hebraic and Christian religion. If a primary purpose of education is to stimulate the creation of a new and healthier social environment, the educational experience cannot be restricted to the study of the traditions that have locked us into our present condition. An understanding by humanists as well as social scientists of the traditions of the East and of Africa, of Islam, and of the cultures we patronizingly call "primitive" and "popular" can help us to achieve the perspective we need to re-examine our own position.

To give curricula the increased intensity and variety that these observations suggest, the quantitative acquisition of information to which the present survey-system of humanistic study is committed will have to be left to the initiative of the student; it is in any case only a preparation for education. The curriculum itself would then concentrate on the intensive examination of material in such a way that the student might come to terms with it as a formative experience. In choosing material, the teacher would be free to select what he finds valuable and stimulating, which may or may not conform to the issues, objects, or ideas previously identified as significant. The choice may alight on small or obscure as well as great and celebrated objects, as the scholar often finds in the unexplored crevices of the distant or recent past something that enlightens and moves him, and he may be able to communicate his response with intensity. Besides, student demand for relevance in teaching is not answered only by subject matter that bears on problems that are most apparent at the moment; the sense of sharing with a devoted preceptor a convincing encounter with unfamiliar or esoteric objects, whether of the past or present, may be a more stimulating experience. The less familiar the material, the more it may extend our horizon, and the more it may reveal aspects of our own culture that we were not prepared to perceive. Indeed, in the humanities, contemporary works prove often to be more foreign than those of the past; even

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sophisticated undergraduates today seem less at ease with Genet, Boullez, and Olitsky than with Shakespeare, Bach, and Piero della Francesca.

The possibility of intensively examining the material of the humanities in an enlarged cultural context rather than in the linear-historical mode also encourages penetration of the rigid barriers that now separate the fields of the humanities from one another and the humanities as an institution from the sciences and the social sciences. Since all disciplines that bear on man and his work are potential contributors to the understanding of humanistic themes, the healthiest atmosphere for scholarship and teaching is the one that encourages contact and collaboration between specialists in different fields.

The curriculum cannot be uniformly involving because many experiences have to be prepared by hard and often unpleasant work. Students of foreign literatures have to learn verbal languages, and scientific students mathematical ones. Moreover, the technology of our time offers a large variety of new languages—the computer and other electronic systems, the film and television—that not only are new media for the communication of familiar concepts, but stimulate the formulation of concepts beyond the reach of the words and symbols we have used in the past. The discipline involved in acquiring tools and techniques is an important factor in self-realization, particularly within an educational system that demands so little of it at the lower levels. But it can be discipline with a purpose, not an end in itself, and the preparatory tasks can be made more interesting and productive than they have been, as the re-formed secondary-school curricula in mathematics and science have demonstrated.

As mathematics and language have been made unnecessarily dreary in the era of Objective Analysis, the performance of art, music, drama, and literary genres has been made demeaningly recreational, as if they were a relaxation from study rather than challenging disciplines. But in spite of this, courses offered in these arts by almost all universities have been preoccupied with technique to the point at which content and meaning are hardly considered, and they rarely have been integrated in conception or in practice into related programs of academic courses. Those who teach them are isolated from others in the faculty, as if the makers of the arts were a threat—not being "objective"—to those who interpret them. Yet a case may be made for the arts on purely academic grounds:

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The analysis of a poem or a sonata can be done better by a person who tries to make one, regardless of whether he succeeds. Practice opens a realm of criticism that resists the grasp of the library-bound scholar. Beyond this, the disciplined training of the ear and the eye that is one of the aims of workshop training does not occur with the same intensity in the process of criticism. Finally, the physical component in the making of things is a unique experience that is at once elemental and sophisticated, and it is one of which most of us are deprived by a culture that provides everything at hand, ready made, and no longer offers us the casual occasion to dance, sing, build, fix, mime, or recite. An educational system in which expository prose is the only legitimate form of expression not only arbitrarily limits the capacity to communicate and the range of what is communicated, but denies fulfillment to individuals peculiarly gifted in other forms of expression, and at inestimable cost to itself.

In portraying the crisis of higher education in terms of the confrontation of two generations with antithetical aims, I have exaggerated for the sake of emphasis. Many teachers and scholars impart more meaning to their subject than my caricature of the Objective Analyst suggests, and many students attend college passively, without demanding—even without wanting—relevance and intense experience. But the conflicts are threatening even if most or all of our universities can be saved from destruction without substantial reforms, because they are the symptoms of a grave ethical vacuum in our society which institutions of higher education are uniquely qualified to fill.

References

1. Political radicals of the two styles are vigorously opposed; members of the older generation who were raised on Marxist idealism are appalled by what appears to them to be the absence of specific goals and by the simply negative or destructive response to existing institutions. Many of the new radicals are as disaffected from Marx and modern Communism as from Capitalism, and look on both as imperialistic machines.
2. See my paper "On Scientia," *Dædalus*, Vol. 94 (1965), pp. 14-23.
3. "Methodology" is a characteristic term of Objective Analysis; it means "the science of method" and implies that method can be a learned discipline in itself.
4. This observation was stimulated by George Steiner, one of the participants

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in our first conference, in *Language and Silence* (New York, 1967), particularly in the essay "To Civilize Our Gentlemen," pp. 55-67.

5. See Bernard Barber, "Resistance by Scientists to Scientific Discovery," *Science*, Vol. 124 (1961), pp. 596ff.

6. This change is intensively examined by David Riesman and Christopher Jencks in *The Academic Revolution* (New York, 1968). Their solution to the problems I am defining, especially in "Reforming the Graduate Schools," pp. 510-23, is close to what I propose here.

7. See "Ethical Aspects of Experimentation with Human Subjects," *Dædalus* (Spring, 1969). For parallels in architecture and engineering, see the article by Michael O'Hare, pp. 765-77.

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Conference on the Condition of the Humanities: December 1 and 2, 1967

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Richard M. Douglas
Gerald F. Else
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Conference on the Future of the Humanities: May 16 and 18, 1968

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